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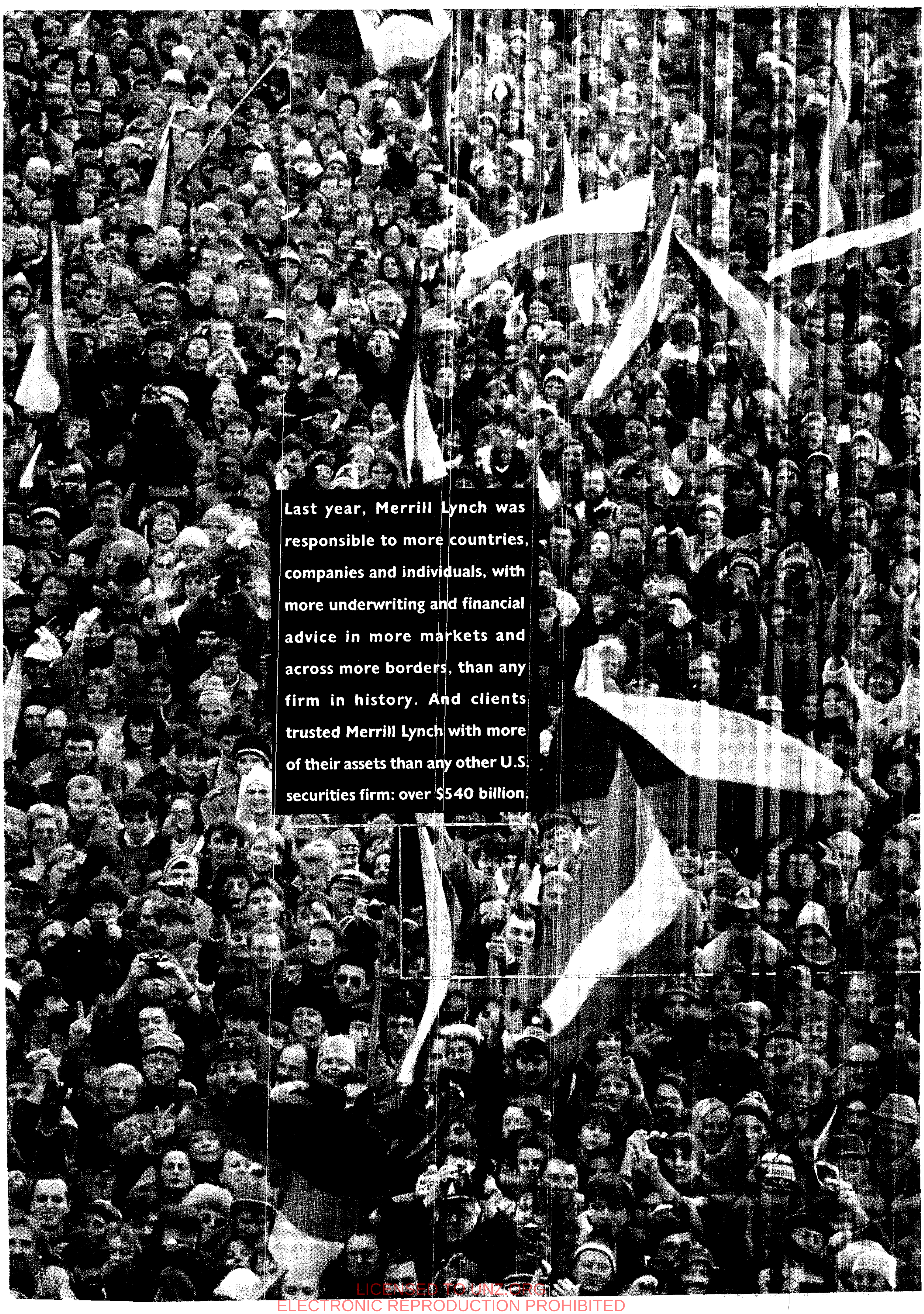

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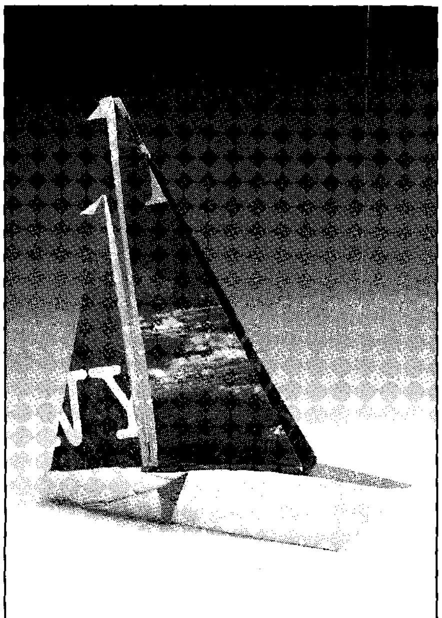

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THE NEW YORKER

APRIL 18, 1994

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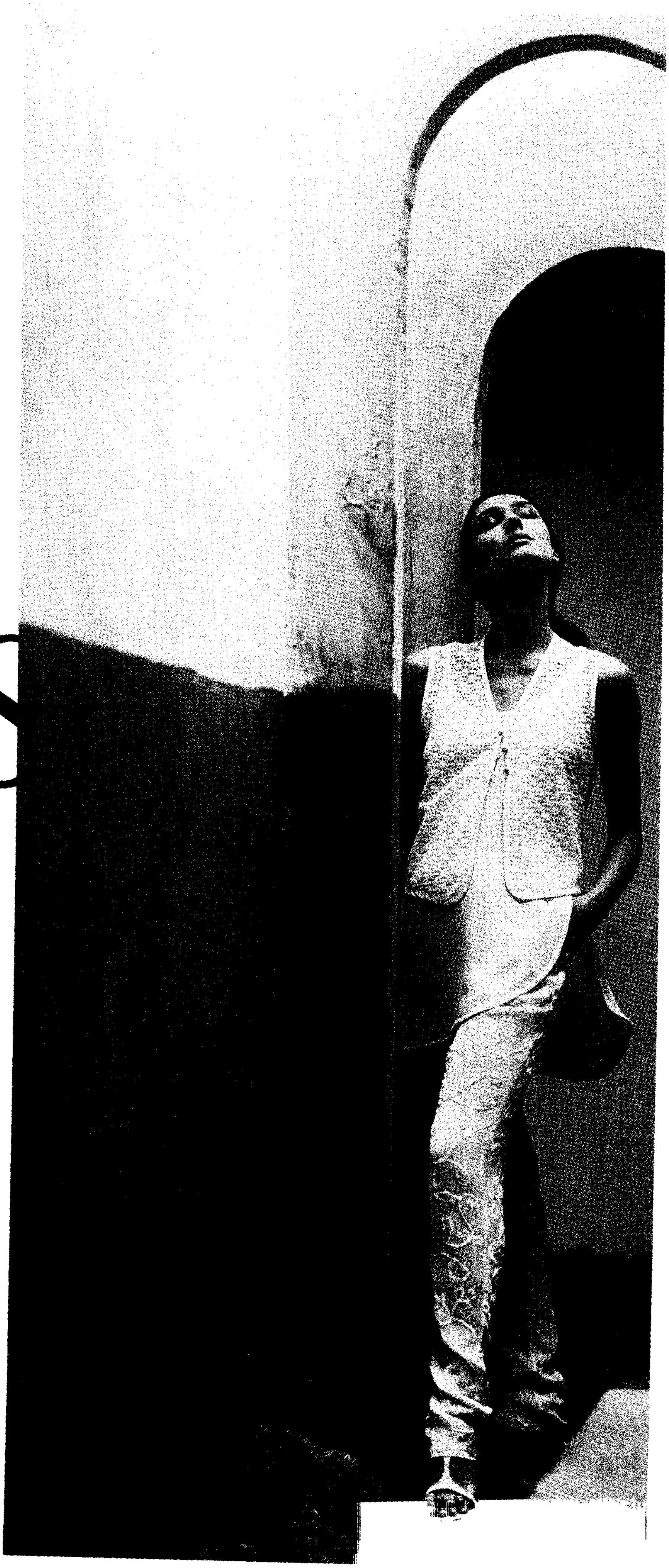

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COMMENT

VOX POPULIST

For the first time since the end of the Second World War, a fascist party is in a position to enter the government of a West European democracy. And that's not all. The Italian election two weeks ago has had another worrying consequence: a businessman with a monopoly on his country's private television networks has successfully used that monopoly to manipulate an electorate already primed for manipulation by the media he himself developed. The businessman, as everyone knows by now, is Silvio Berlusconi, and he has been an admirer of American media salesmanship ever since he was given a copy of David Halberstam's "The Powers That Be," and took it to be a how-to book about building media empires, not an indictment against them. Now Berlusconi wants to be Prime Minister, and he has sold himself to Italy, using a packaged party called Forza Italia! (Go Italy!) and a packaged persona created by merchandisers and forced as "coverage" on the journalists at his television stations and at the newspapers and magazines he also owns. Journalists who complained—Indro Montanelli, the editor of *Il Giornale*, was one—were forced to go. When the votes were counted, Berlusconi and his coalition had a comfortable majority in the Italian parliament.

Italy is likely to survive Berlusconi and his infomercials, since the parties that make up that majority are at such venomous cross-purposes that it may be impossible for him to keep a government together. But the warning to the rest of the West is clear: Italy's elections were a trial run down the not so innocuous information superhighway and into a future in which the person who commands the airwaves controls the decisions millions of other people make about public and political life. Berlusconi had an owner's free and constant access to Italy's most popular television stations. He used that access to accumulate political power for himself, and in the end it doesn't matter whether he did it to cover his company's debts (as his opponents claimed)

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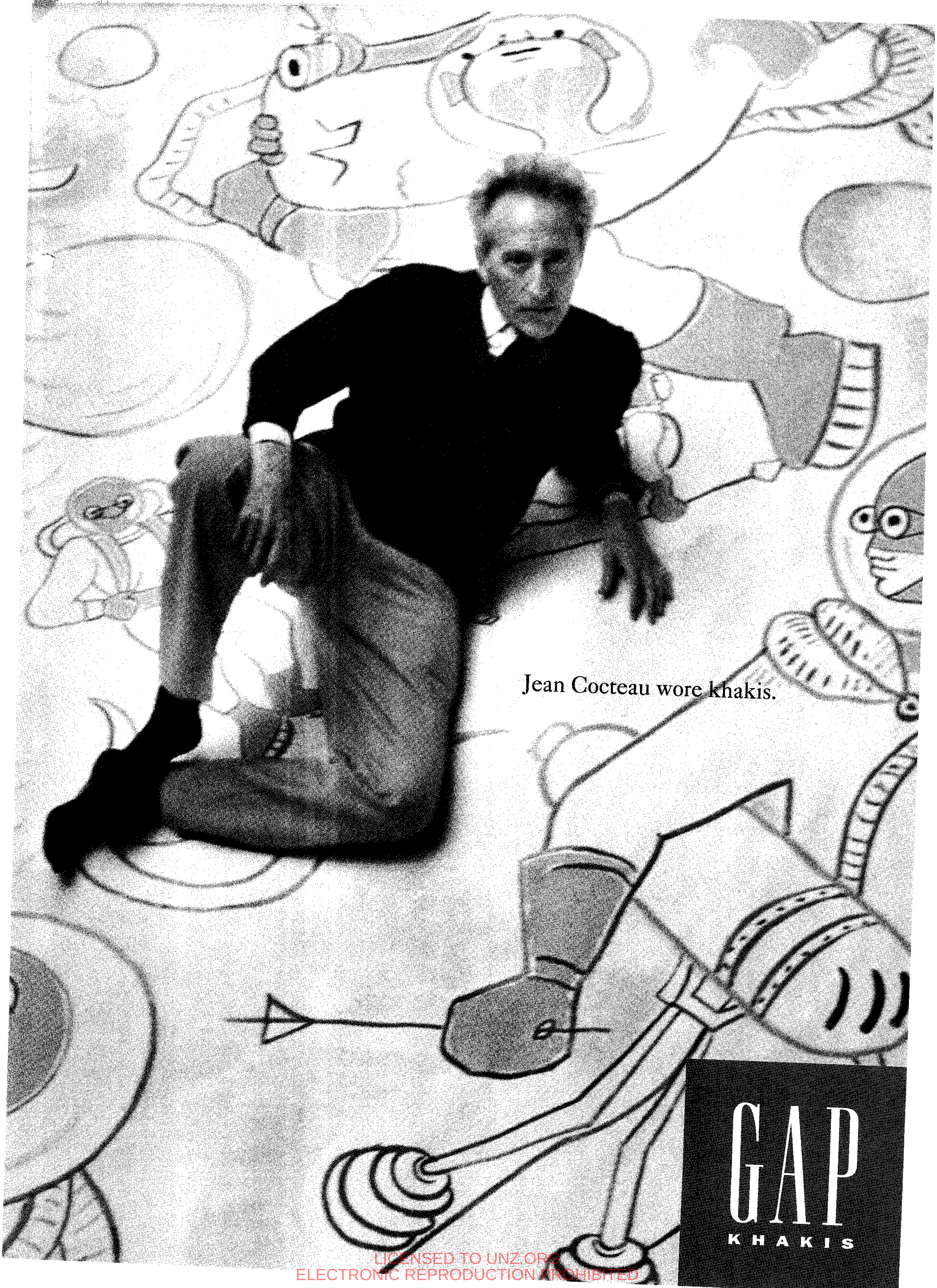
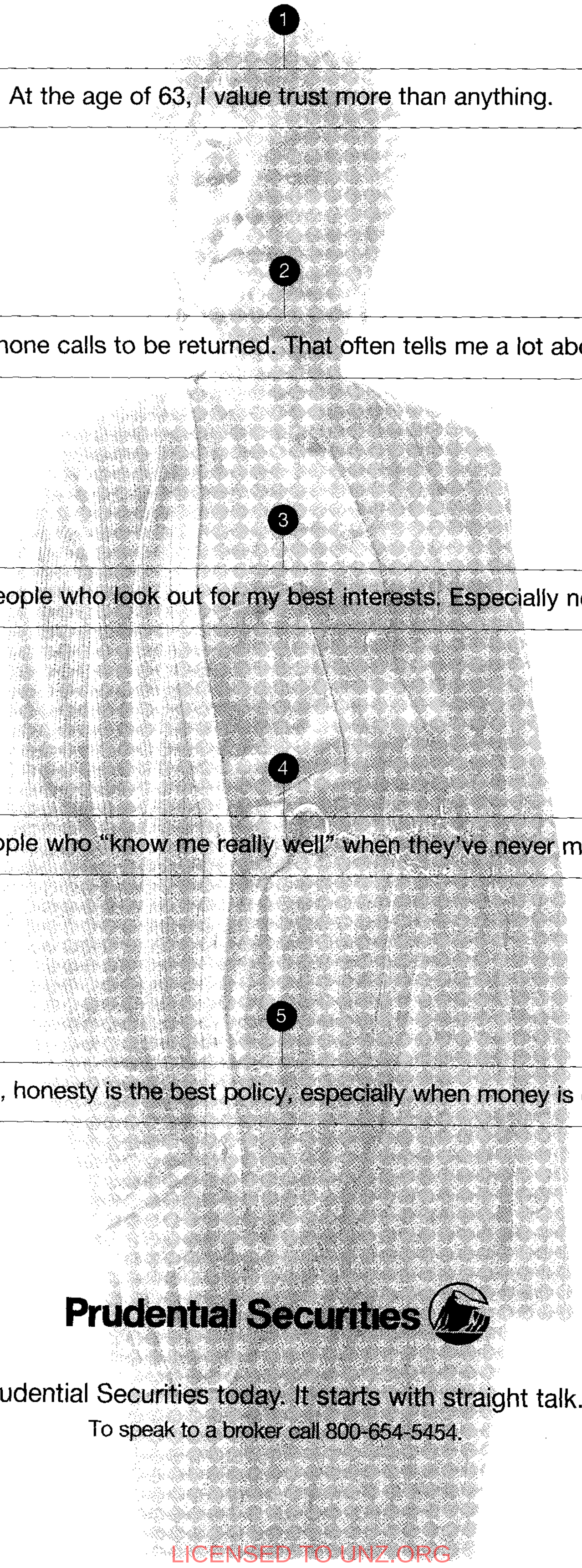

Jean Cocteau wore khakis.
GAP
KHAKIS

"This is his first Fed tightening."

or because he wanted immunity from indictment in the country's corruption scandals (as some prosecutors claimed) or because he truly believed that he was the man to save Italy from the Communists and the crooks he discovered during the three months of what passed in Italy for a political campaign. A country's only real defense against the manipulations of a character like Berlusconi is to see to it that people are free to vote with understanding, and in Italy that freedom was subverted by a blitz of "messages to Italy," broadcast eighteen times a day from a studio in Milan where the principle of equal time and equal access was considered a loser's complaint.

The electoral spectacle was entertaining at first, because Berlusconi was entertaining. He had bought the soccer team he watched. He had bought the theatre where his mistress performed. He had bought the politicians who bent the laws to make him a construction millionaire and then a media billionaire—by which time he had the money and the power to offer himself to Italy as the country's last honest entrepreneur. He had beaten the system that produced him. It was the kind of success that Italians, suffering the system, admired. They thought of him the way he thought of himself—as somehow "American." They were persuaded that at last an Italian could be "American" and sell anything he wanted to anybody he chose without having to leave home for a country where the pasta was questionable. The reporters he didn't own saw him differently: when he opened his Forza Italia! "clubs" in January and started broadcasting his infomercials, they called him Pol Spot. The foreign press was more credulous. It used words like "dynamic" and "creative" to describe him. *Newsweek* called him a "merchant prince" and put him on a cover. He was said to be "smart, savvy, and a risk taker," and a "great salesman" with a "global" perspective, but the people who said so were businessmen like him, and not necessarily people you would call vigilantes of the public interest. Until the election, no one outside Italy seemed to be connecting Berlusconi's blitz with the populist politics exploding all across Europe. There were weeks when Italy was hardly mentioned in the *Times* at all.

The questions Americans should be asking now are not about Berlusconi. They are about the connection between technology and populism, and about our promiscuous enthusiasm for "information." It may be that to understand what happened in Italy we have to imagine a man with the communications power of a Ted Turner *and* a Rupert Murdoch deciding to be President of the United States, choosing some homegrown Zhirinovsky as a running mate, and using CNN and Fox to advertise his slogans (but not his opponents') as news. In this country, of course, a candidate like that would have to divest. Berlusconi talked about putting his holdings in a blind trust, and turned his office over to the bandleader who used to hire him, summers, as a cruise singer, but he never divested. Conflict of interest was not a concept he recognized. In the absence of politicians to look after his interests—the scandals had finished those politicians—he became a politician to look after his interests himself, and, he told Italians, to look after their interests, too. But if he wanted a better Italy, he didn't want it enough not to ally himself with a fascist who promised to deliver the southern vote (and called Benito Mussolini "the greatest statesman of the century"), or with a Northern League whose leader had suggested that southerners entering Milan be made to carry internal passports, so that they couldn't stay. The alliance he put together had nothing at all to do with a vision of Italy, or a consensus in Italy, or even a politics *for* Italy. The antipolitics of populism thrives on the resentment of ordinary people who believe, with some truth, that privileged people—people with power, or money, or status, or contempt—have ignored them. Italians had a lot to resent: a rotted politics, a state in which the only institution that functioned was the institution of corruption. Berlusconi seduced them with an "I did it, you can do it" fantasy of themselves, but his message to the rest of us is no fantasy. The new concentrations of media power are an alarming development in many countries. The new populism has found expression all over the democratic and would-be-democratic world. Italy is a lesson in what happens when one man's ambition puts this new kind of power at the service of this new kind of politics. ♦



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4

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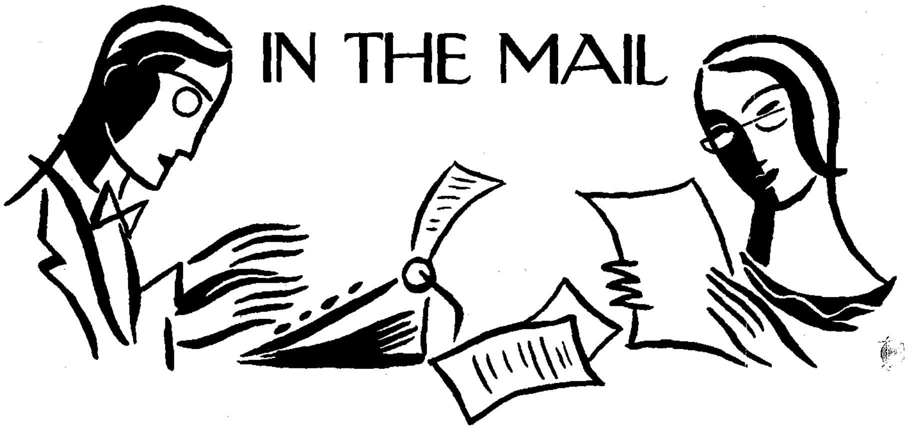

IN THE MAIL

AT THE MOVIES

Clive James points out, in "Mondo Fellini" (March 21st), that Fellini's films are highly affective and feel intensely personal to the viewer. But the viewer doesn't necessarily have to be male (and married) to feel this way about Fellini's oeuvre. In just about every Fellini film I've experienced, including "8½," there is a moment—usually toward the very end—when the images fall into their proper places and I *see*. The world is transformed into an intricate and magical place, to be explored and savored, instead of remaining the all too familiar landscape it seemed an hour or two before. And the feeling lasts as I move from the theatre into the streets: an empty beer can clattering down the sidewalk in the winter wind resonates with significance—beauty, even. It's as though I'd learned to view the world with hope again—a bittersweet proposition, given the inevitable clash between hopes and reality, but infinitely preferable to the cynicism that passes for maturity these days.

JANELLE YATES
Staten Island, N.Y.

Years ago, I called Pauline Kael "the first frigid of the film critics," and now she has paid a bit of it back by saying that once upon a time, place unspecified, I offered to butt heads with her ("Reflections," March 21st).

The only way I could have proposed that was as a joke—I promise. Kael, however, having gained her deepest experiences exclusively from film, is hugely fearful of uncharted encounters, and this fearfulness is in direct proportion to her grandiosity of ego. Ergo, she reacted with her characteristic lack of street savvy, and got it all wrong. You have to feel kinship with somebody to butt his head.

NORMAN MAILER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

What an unexpected delight it was to see Pauline Kael's lively, sparkling intelligence once again lighting up the pages of *The New Yorker*. With just a few off-the-cuff remarks she managed to blow away all the toxic academic fumes that had been swirling around such overrated media darlings as "The Crying Game," "The Piano," and "Unforgiven." It took her singular return to make me realize how much I had missed her voice in the magazine.

RALPH SEPULVEDA, JR.
New York City

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in his article on the filmmaking Hughes brothers, candidly observes of "Menace II Society" that "the Hugheses were spooked by the cheers and laughter that greeted some of the film's brutality." "That's not what we wanted," he quotes Albert Hughes as saying. "But black people look at films differently from white people. . . . They take it more easy; they know it's a film." I believe that this quote exemplifies the kind of dishonesty, wishful thinking, or simple ignorance that sabotages earnest attempts to resolve America's racial animosity. If Albert Hughes *can* generalize this way, allow me to observe that too many urban black kids today look at *violence*—not at film—differently from many white kids, even when the violence is black-on-black crime. It's this ghettoized and complex view of violence that is new and dangerously different. Maybe the Hugheses are simply too young to understand that just twenty years ago a different generation of black kids would *not* have laughed so readily at on-screen violence. Let's be honest about what has changed.

MARC WALLACE
New York City

I just turned eighty and have spent most of the past sixty years in the international film industry. You could not have given me a greater birthday present than your movie issue. John Seabrook's article about the publicist Pat Kingsley reminded me of how, fifty years ago, I became a press agent. I had been working as a secretary to Mike Todd, the producer, and Earl Ferris, the owner of an agency that represented all the radio shows of the day, asked me to cover "The Phil Baker Show." When I asked what that meant, Mr. Ferris said, "You go to the recording of the show and when it is finished you walk up to Phil Baker and say to him 'What a wonderful show. You were so great.' You have to be the first person to get to him to say that." Puzzled, I asked what it meant if I was the second, and Mr. Ferris replied, "It means he has another press agent." Thus a career was launched.

EDDIE JAFFE
New York City

Calvin Trillin is correct in bringing "Gunga Din" at last into critical focus. His woundingly casual stroll past "The Four Feathers," however, is unsettling. "Gunga Din" contains extraordinarily high-quality stuff, but the final scene of "The Four Feathers"—young Harry Faversham destroying the old general's mind-numbing tale of war and slaughter in the Crimea, then returning the final feather (a symbol of cowardice) to his adoring fiancée with a triumphant "Ethne, your feather!"—is simply the finest movie ending ever filmed. Nonetheless, I have no better luck than Mr. Trillin at home. "So what?" says my deeply unimpressed spouse. "It always ends the same way." She doesn't think much of "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," either.

ARNOLD ROSENFELD
Atlanta, Ga.

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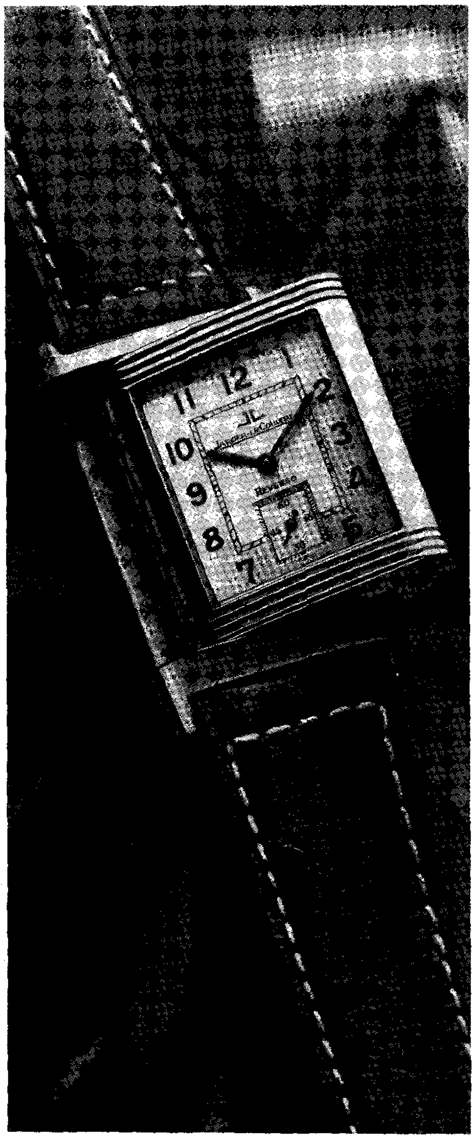

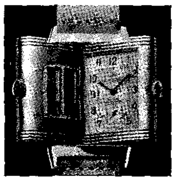

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Panoramic

African artists are generally underrepresented in New York's cultural life. The continent's filmmakers are starting to gain a foothold locally, aided in large measure by the Film Society of Lincoln Center's African Film Festival (which continues through April 24 at the Walter Reade Theatre), but playwrights from Africa have had no comparable showplace. The Ghanaian-born actor Adusah Boakye is trying to remedy the situation through his African Arts Theatre Company. The troupe made its début last year, with a stirring production of a Kenyan play called "The Black Hermit," by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and it is currently presenting "The Panorama," a 1987 drama by the South African playwright Pieter-Dirk Uys (Theatre Row Theatre; through April 24).

Mr. Uys has had a varied career. He was born in Cape Town in 1945, studied film in London, and, until the South African government began banning his work, in the seventies, wrote plays of piercing social commentary. Comedy then became his vehicle; in particular, he was known for his outrageous one-man shows, which he continues to perform. In the past few years, Mr. Uys has also returned to more pointedly dramatic works. "The Panorama," which concerns a young girl's visit to her father, who is imprisoned in a penal colony on an island off the coast of South Africa, is probably the finest of these.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Amphigorey: A Musicale—Fifteen Edward Gorey stories set to music. With sets by Mr. Gorey, of course, and a score by Peter Golub. Previews through April 15. Opens April 16 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 777-7474.)

Beauty and the Beast—The long-awaited musical juggernaut, based on the 1991 Disney movie, features the songs of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as a few new ones by Mr. Menken and Tim Rice. With Susan Egan as Belle, Terrence Mann as the Beast, Burke Moses as Gaston, and Tom Bosley as Belle's father. Previews through April 17. Opens April 18 at 6:30. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public—A sequel to the 1978 musical, with much of the same creative lineup: Larry L. King (book), Peter Masterson (book and direction), Tommy Tune (direction and, with Jeff Calhoun, choreography), and Carol Hall (score). Dee Hoty and Scott Holmes co-star. Previews begin April 14. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Broken Glass—A new play by Arthur Miller, with Ron Rifkin, Amy Irving, and David Dukes. John Tillinger directed. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Fallen Angel—Corey Glover (the vocalist from Living Colour) has the lead in this play about a rock band, written by Billy Boesky, who also wrote some songs for the show. Preview on April 13. Opens April 14 at 7. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

Hide Your Love Away: The Ballad of Brian Epstein—Kevin Scott's play about the Beatles' manager takes place in 1967. Previews through April 17. Opens April 19 at 8. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

An Inspector Calls—The Royal National Theatre production of J. B. Priestley's mystery thriller, with Rosemary Harris, Kenneth Cranham, and Philip Bosco. Previews begin April 14. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jewish Repertory Theatre—Presenting "Teibele and Her Demon," a 1979 play by Isaac Bashevis Singer and Eve Friedman, based on Mr. Singer's story of the same title. Previews through April 16. Opens April 17 at 7. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

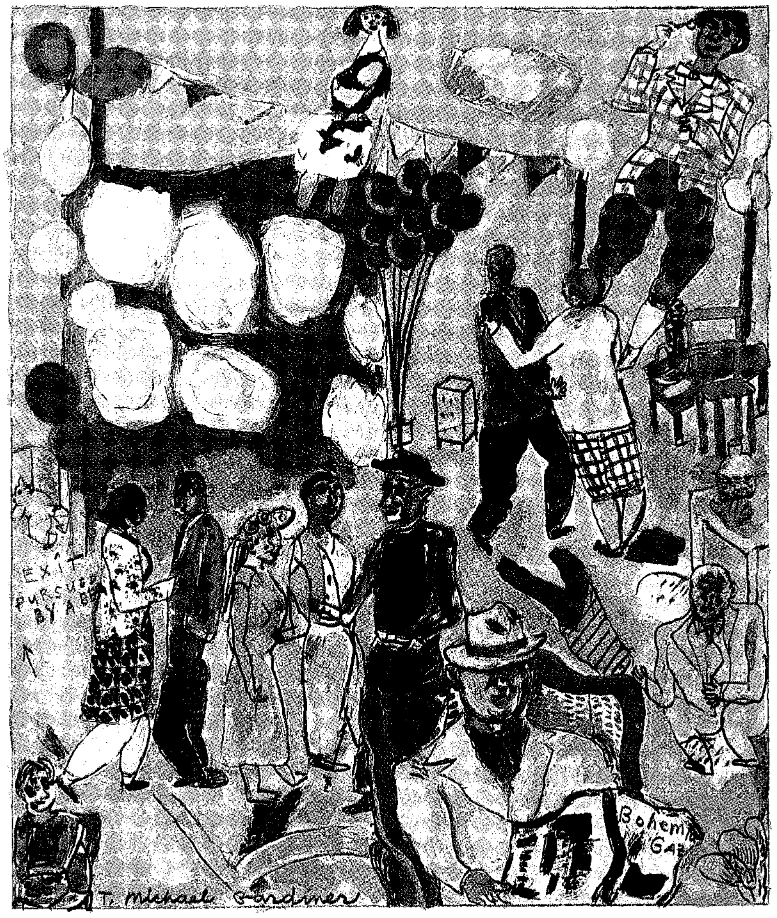
Passion—Stephen Sondheim's new musical, with a book by James Lapine, who also directed. Donna Murphy, Jere Shea, and Marin Mazzie lead the cast. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Picnic—*A revival of William Inge's play, by* the Roundabout Theatre Company. The cast includes Ashley Judd and Kyle Chandler. Directed by Scott Ellis. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Rise and Fall of Little Voice—Hynden Walch portrays a painfully shy woman with a remarkable singing voice, in this play by Jim Cartwright. A Steppenwolf Theatre Company production. Previews begin April 15. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Sally Marr . . . and her escorts—Joan Rivers stars in a play about the mother of Lenny Bruce. Written by Ms. Rivers, Erin Sanders, and Lonny Price. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Shaker Heights—*A comedy by Quincy Long.* Previews through April 17. Opens April 18 at 8. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)



"The Winter's Tale" at BAM.

T. MICHAEL GARDINER

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show, seen recently at the Public Theatre. Previews through April 16. Opens April 17 at 6:45. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Winter's Tale—The Royal Shakespeare Company presents the Bard's comedy, with Suzanne Burden, Mark Hadfield, Gemma Jones, and John Nettles. The engagement begins April 19 at 7 and runs through April 24. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette St. 1-718 636-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

Blue Hill Troupe—In benefit performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Utopia Limited." (John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 58th St. Closes April 16. For information about tickets, call 988-7540.)

Brothers of the Brush—This first effort by Jimmy Murphy, a Dublin housepainter turned playwright, concerns the mutual suspicion among three housepainters, who are renovating a basement flat in Dublin, and the penny-pinching contractor they work for. The theme is the destructiveness of the every-man-for-himself ethos, but there's plenty of comic byplay to leaven the proceedings. With Ronan Carr, Paul McGrane, Paul Ronan, and Mickey Kelly, and directed by Nye Heron. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 (nine Tonys) is back, in its first Broadway revival, with Victor Garber as the Devil and Bebe Neuwirth as Lola. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). The result is a vehicle that swerves between fifties stodginess and nineties cynicism. But the cast delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. The colorful sets are by Douglas W. Schmidt. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/4/94.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Day the Bronx Died—Akili Prince, Luis A. Laporte, Jr., and Neal Huff portray three teen-age friends—two black, one Jewish—in Michael Henry Brown's play. Also with Leon Addison Brown. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes April 17.)

Desert of Roses—An avant-garde spin on the "Beauty and the Beast" tale, by Robert Moran (score) and Michael John LaChiusa (libretto). (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Closes April 24.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Flowering Peach—Clifford Odets' 1954 play, a retelling of the story of Noah and the Ark, is a comedy of righteousness, but this sleepy National Actors Theatre production, directed by Martin Charnin, manages only lacklustre cartoons. With Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, and Josh Mostel. (4/4/94) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes April 24.)

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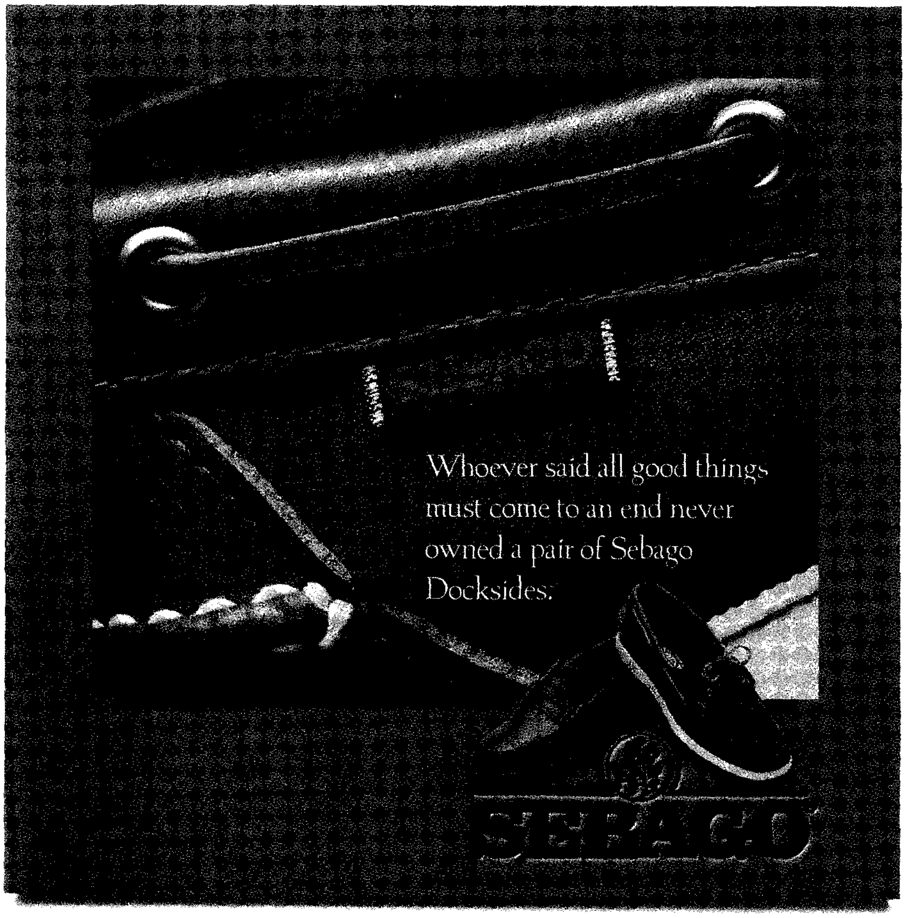

Whoever said all good things must come to an end never owned a pair of Sebago Docksides.
SEBAGO

THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. With Arabella Field, Peter Jacobson, Ann Magnuson, and Reg Rogers. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Fragments—The Signature Theatre Company winds up its Edward Albee season with his most recent full-length play. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—The comedian/commentator's new one-man show. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—A considerably pumped-up version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's first musical, with former soap star Michael Damian in the title role. The Bible was never like this. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Jubilee—A production of the Cole Porter musical that gave us "Begin the Beguine" and "Just One of Those Things." The book is by Moss Hart. (Medicine Show, 552 W. 53rd St. 262-4216. Closes April 23.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Medea—Diana Rigg returns to Broadway in London's Almeida Theatre production of Euripides' play. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Mort Sahl's America—The political humorist, in a solo engagement. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Movieland—Everett Quinton portrays any number of silver-screen divas in this Ridiculous Theatrical Company show. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. With Melissa Errico as Eliza Doolittle and Michael Moriarty as Professor Henry Higgins. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

New York Rock—Yoko Ono's new musical is less a complete book than a series of blackouts punctuated by songs in a pastiche of stage and rock styles. The inescapably autobiographical theme concerns the way violent acts can thwart love between men and women. The staging is inventive, the vigorous cast sings its heart out, and there are a few wonderful moments, but they never mask the awkward and willfully ingenuous nature of the venture. Directed by Phillip Oesterman. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes April 17.)

The Panorama—A 1987 play by Pieter-Dirk Uys. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 564-7893. Closes April 24.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—The latest solo show by the boss of monologuists, Eric Bogosian. (2/21/94) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100. Closes April 24.)

Reel to Real—Mabou Mines presents a play by Frederick Neumann, which incorporates a film about a play. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Closes April 24.)

Richard II—Shakespeare's history play, with Michael Stuhlbarg and André Braugher. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 1.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, with Myra Carter, Marian Seldes, and Jordan Baker representing three generations of women trying to sort out their pasts. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Triumph of Love—A production of Marivaux's 1732 romantic farce in a witty new translation by James Magruder. The actors are entirely credible in their ridiculous roles, and, under Michael Mayer's deft direction, physical comedy and clever lines get equal billing. With Margaret Welsh, Camryn Manheim, and Thom Christopher. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Who Will Carry the Word?—Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote this play about women in the death camps. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Written and Sealed—A work by the Venezuelan playwright Isaac Chocrón, performed in English (three times a week) and Spanish (four times a week). (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes April 17.)

LONG RUNS

ANGELS IN AMERICA: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BEAU JEST:** Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Duplex Planet Radio Hour—The final installment in David Greenberger's series of monologues based on interviews with nursing-home residents. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. April 17 at 7.)

DANCE

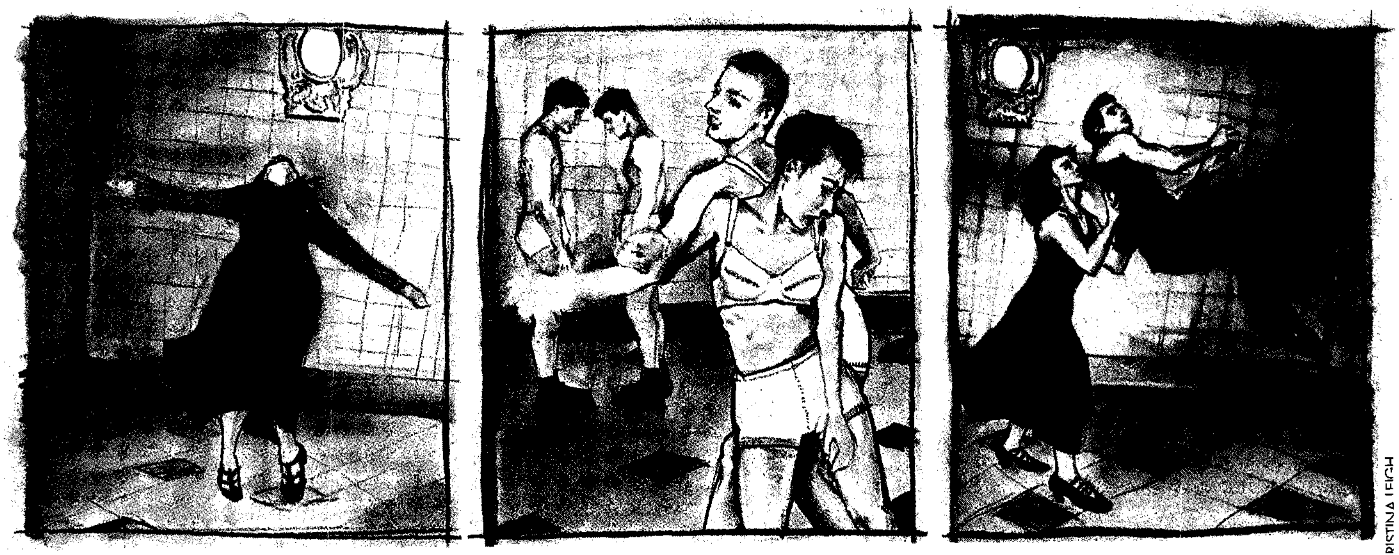
Joffrey Ballet—Final performances of the engagement. April 13-14 and April 16 at 8, and April 17 at 2 and 7:30: "Billboards." . . . ¶ April 15 at 8 and April 16 at 2: "Les Patineurs," "A Tri-Fling," "The Garden of Villandry," and "Light Rain." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

O Vertigo—A Montreal-based company of ten members, directed by choreographer Ginette Laurin. The program features "La Chambre Blanche," a work that premièred in Montreal in 1992 and is set in a turn-of-the-century public bath. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 13-16 at 8 and April 17 at 2.)

Neta Pulvermacher—In a program featuring the première of "Good-bye and Good Luck." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 14-16 at 8 and April 17 at 3.)

Michael Mao Dance—Offering three New York premières and a revival. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. April 14-16 at 8.)

Scapino Ballet Rotterdam—The opening performance of a one-week engagement; the program is a full-length work titled "Kathleen." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. April 19 at 8. Through April 24.)



"La Chambre Blanche," a dance performed by O Vertigo.

CHRISTINA LEIGH

NIGHT LIFE

Wipeout

THAT Dick Dale is the chief pioneer and master of surf-rock guitar is indisputable. In the early sixties, his staccato, reverb-laden leads were echoed in the sound of California bands like the Beach Boys and the Ventures. He recorded seminal surfer singles like "Miserlou" and "Let's Go Trippin'," and co-starred with Frankie and Annette in "Beach Party" and "Muscle Beach Party." But Dale's influence extends well beyond the impact of this particular big wave in pop music. His speedy, furious picking technique led *Guitar Player* to proclaim him "the father of heavy metal," and other axe worshippers have detected his influence in the work of inland rockers like the Ramones and Sonic Youth. He spent the seventies as a nostalgia act and real-estate investor, but in the eighties hard times befell Orange County's original rock-and-roll hero: in a bitter divorce settlement, Dale lost a night club he'd owned, and he suffered second-degree burns over much of his body, including his left hand, in a freak accident.

These days, however, the guitarist is back on the beat. Dale has a new wife and child, a new band, and a new album of instrumentals, called "Tribal Thunder." He and his band, the Dick Dale Tribe, bring their recent material, along with some old favorites, to two metropolitan venues this week: the Grand, on April 13, and Maxwell's, on April 17. Don't expect any stories about hanging ten and shooting the tube, though. The guitarist has been born again as an environmentalist; he no longer surfs, out of fear and loathing of water pollution. In a recent interview, Dale spoke about passing on his love of the sport to his children. "I'll show them how to surf," he said, "but when I get them out of the water I'm going to hose them off real fast."

CONCERTS

James Brown—Now in his sixties, the Godfather of Soul has released more than eighty records—several of them transcendentally great, most of them excellent, and all of them featuring at least one groove that has found its way onto somebody else's record. If a fraction of all the artists who have sampled, borrowed from, or just plain ripped off Brown were to share the wealth, he'd be a very rich man. A few years ago, Brown hit bottom, led a few state troopers on a high-speed chase, and spent some time in prison. He seems to have overcome his troubles, and he's back on the road, preaching the funk with a newfound evangelical fervor. He may have lost a little fire in the hips and a note or two from his trademark howl, but, at an age when lesser mortals are contemplating retirement, James Brown is still a sex machine. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. April 15 at 8.)

Phish—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 13-15 at 8.

Frank Sinatra—With Don Rickles. (Radio City Music Hall. April 19 at 8. Through April 24.)

The O'Jays, the Whispers, and LeVert—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. April 14 at 7:30.

The Benoit/Freeman Project—With the Holly Cole trio. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 15 at 8.)

Gao Hong—In a program of Chinese pipa music. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. April 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Big Apple Barbershop Chorus—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 16 at 8.

Andreas Vollenweider—Beacon Theatre. April 16 at 8.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya—Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 17 at 7:30.

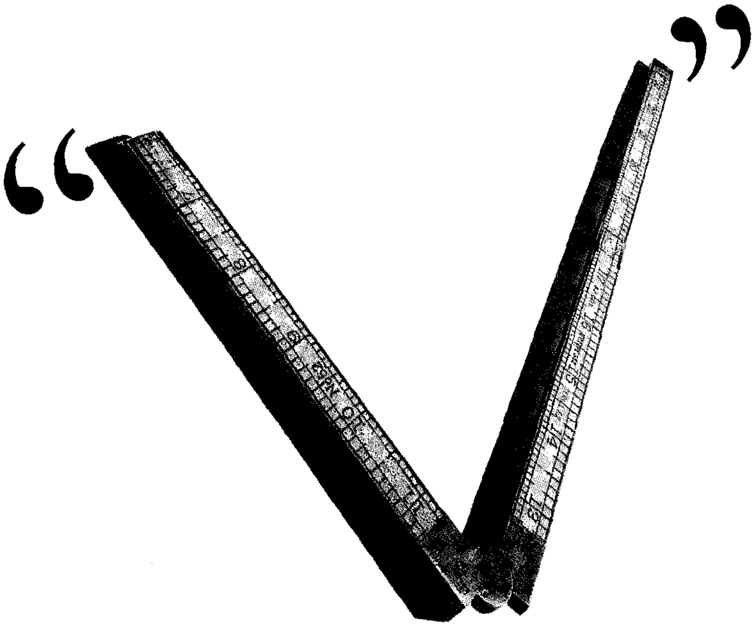
Toby Twining Music—Prospect Park Picnic House, Prospect Park W. at 3rd St., Brooklyn. April 17 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.

Carnegie Hall Folk Festival—The first two in a series of five concerts. April 15: "Baseball Blues," a program devoted to songs and stories of America's favorite pastime, with Bobby Thomson, Dave Frishberg, the Persuasions, and the Polka Family Band. . . . ¶ April 19: "The Singing Cowboys," a concert of cowboy music by Brownie Ford, Sourdough Slim, and the duo Horse Sense. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Concerts at 8. Through April 30.)

ROCK AND FOLK

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Irish music with **MORNING STAR,** on April 15.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On April 14: a tribute to blues legend Muddy Waters. The all-star lineup for this celebration includes **JIMMY ROGERS, PINETOP PERKINS, LUTHER (GUITAR JUNIOR) JOHNSON, WILLIE SMITH, PAUL OSCHER, CALVIN JONES,** and **LESTER (BIG DADDY) KINSEY.** Angry middle-aged man **GRAHAM PARKER** performs solo on April 16. Back in the seventies, Parker was among a handful of groundbreaking singer-songwriters who dragged the ruggedly lyrical tradition of Bob Dylan and Van Morrison kicking and screaming into the punk era. Parker's first album, released in 1976, actually predates Elvis Costello's début by a year, as Parker would be only too glad to



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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

tell you. Unfortunately, he hasn't matched Costello's consistency or his inspired eclecticism over the years. Still, if a terse, acerbic love song is what you're after, Parker's aim is true.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—On April 14: **STEVE WYNN.** Wynn fronted the L.A.-based Dream Syndicate in the eighties, and is a sometime member of the endearingly scrappy rock outfit Gutterball. On his new solo effort, "Fluorescent," Wynn lends his anarchic charm to folk-acoustic arrangements, enlisting a three-piece backing band and guests like John Wesley Harding and ex-Bangle Vicki Peterson. This appearance is basically an album-release party: here's your chance to be among the first to hear Wynn's new songs. April 15: **PETRONELLA,** *a new folk duo.*

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. **QUEEN SARAH SATURDAY** drops by on April 13.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—The **GRASSHOPPERS** appear every Saturday night.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling, with a wall-o'-speakers up front and an ear-decompression lounge around the bar in the back. The **DICK DALE TRIBE** is here on April 13.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. April 14: retro-rockers **MAGGIE'S DREAM** appear. **MUDHONEY** arrives on April 15. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Perennial alternative-rock favorites the **MELVINS** bring their mixture of heavy-metal textures and punk nihilism to the club on April 14, with guests **THE OBSESSED.** April 19: **OZRIC TENTACLES.** The Tentacles, who hail from England and dress suspiciously like the groovy squatters in "In the Name of the Father," play aggressive instrumental music rife with Middle Eastern scales and other ouzo-flavored references. The band has a tendency toward psychedelia—strobe lights, fog machines, marijuana advocacy—*but they're more interesting than your average hippies.*

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—An unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can drink cheap and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** *a straight-shooting bar band that* plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

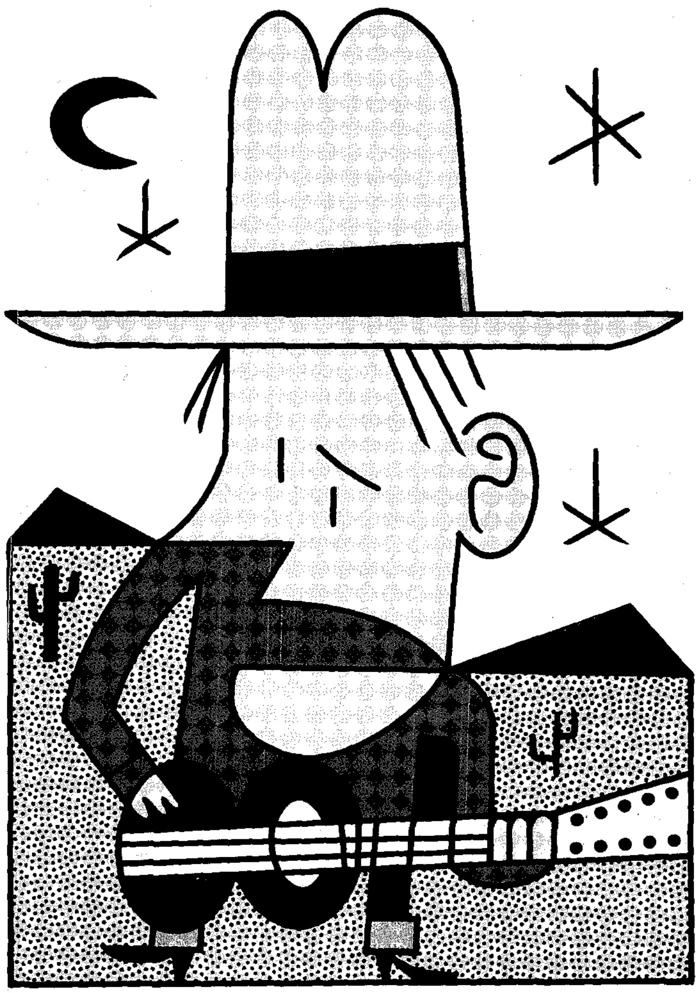
Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On April 17, the **DICK DALE TRIBE** surfs on over, following its April 13 show at the Grand. **KRISTIN HERSH** appears on April 19. A graduate of the postmodern girl group Throwing Muses, Hersh *recently released* "Hips and Makers," a spare acoustic solo album emphasizing the creepy charms of her like-it-or-not voice, which many college-rock fans seem to like a lot. "It's really freaky," Hersh told *Spin* of her songwriting process, "but so is everything else. It's like having babies. How do you have babies? *That's* crazy." Tori Amos may have a kindred spirit.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there's no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the place.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week: another dark, sweaty *rock club,* with flannel-clad stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit. **PANTERA** rocks out on April 13. "Far Beyond Driven," the new release by these self-proclaimed "cowboys from hell," is currently the No. 1 record in the country. Pantera's incredible success probably has a lot to do with singer Philip Anselmo's trademark "guttural spews," which, we would wager, are best appreciated from a distance. Live, the boys promise to "crush at your ears like a vice [sic]." With **CROWBAR** (a great name for an opening act).

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The **FUNKY METERS** (the adjective has been added for contractual reasons) swing by on April 15-16, with **MILO Z.** Now that funk historicism is all the rage, it's a good time to praise the mighty Meters. As the New Orleans counterpart of Memphis's Booker T. and the MGs, the Meters were the backbone of that city's soul sound; their hits define funk at its leanest and toughest. . . . ¶ At Tramps Café, New Orleans-style blues and R. & B. with **WALTER (WOLFMAN) WASHINGTON,** April 15-16.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. On April 15: **BIM SKALA BIM,** with **BOP HARVEY** and **PERFECT THYROID.**



"The Singing Cowboys" at the Carnegie Hall Folk Festival.

J.D. KING

JAZZ AND BLUES

A.K.A, 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. There's a long, elegant bar with enough seats to accommodate the few non-dancers; it can be a tight squeeze, but it's a svelte crowd. **GROOVE COLLECTIVE** entertains every Friday.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Fledgling bassist **DWAYNE BURNO** leads a quin*tet on April 15-16. Dining.*

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. The **RAMSEY LEWIS** quintet continues through April 17, with **SPECIAL EFX. BOB JAMES** starts on April 19.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through April 16: **SANTI DEBRIANO.** Debriano is fast becoming a first-call bassist for discerning leaders; here, he fronts his own unit. Joining Panama's own will be pianist Dave Kikoski, drummer Tommy Campbell, and saxophonist Donny McAslin. On April 17, **PETER LEITCH** drops by. Leitch, a transplanted Canadian, plays bop guitar with bite, drive, and refreshing intelligence. His current infatuation, with the music of Charles Mingus, reveals Leitch's concern for structure and rhythmic vitality. **PHILIP HARPER** begins on April 18. The popular Harper Brothers band is now a memory, but trumpeter Philip plays on, broadening his scope and sound with each new venture. Pianist **NORMAN SIMMONS,** one of the great accompanists, and bassist **RICHIE GOODS** will *also be on hand. Dining.*

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Deep in the heart of the meat district, an authentic old locker has been converted into a banquette-lined paradise. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop.

Down Beat, 101 Seventh Ave. S. (620-4000)—A long, warm, wood-panelled room with upholstered banquettes, a nicely appointed bar, and a reliable roster of jazz names. Murals of Diz, Bird, and Basie adorn the walls, so the players are always in good company. **RACHEL Z** begins an engagement on April 19. This pianist, a fresh face on the jazz scene, is a promising modernist with brisk responses and an ear for concise melody.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden inside the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. April 16: **SUSAN MC KEOWN AND THE CHANTING HOUSE** perform. Dining.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. The **ROY MERIWETHER** trio appears April 15-16. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. **BILL MAYS** and **JOHN GOLDSBY** team up through April 16. Mays' classic duet recording with Red Mitchell proved that the pianist can establish cosmic rapport with a bassist. Goldsby, a fine mainstreamer with a big sound, will be Mays' lucky partner for this engagement.

RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

HOLE, "Live Through This" (Geffen).

THE ROLLINS BAND, "Weight" (Imago).

DR. JOHN, "Television" (GRP).

PINK FLOYD, "The Division Bell" (Columbia).

GIL SCOTT-HERON, "Spirits" (TVT).

"BACKBEAT: SONGS FROM THE ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE" (Virgin).

THE SUBDUDES, "Annunciation" (High Street).

IRIS DEMENT, "My Life" (Reprise).

CHARLIE HADEN QUARTET WEST, "Always Say Goodbye" (Verve).

MORPHINE, "Thursday" (Rykodisc).

OTIS RUSH, "Ain't Enough Coming In" (Mercury).

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, "I Got Shoes" (Music for Little People).

GARY PEACOCK & RALPH TOWNER, "Oracle" (ECM).

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. Guitarist **DAVE TRONZO** hosts a record-release party on April 14. Tronzo's specialty is bebop slide guitar. It's a mixture that makes for some very unusual music, sort of like Duane Allman meets Charlie Parker.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. April 19: **POPA CHUBBY** hosts a blues jam.

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—The basement space in this swank café is now hosting a series of high-profile jazz gigs. **ELVIN JONES** is in on April 15-17, with his star-studded **JAZZ MACHINE.** More than a quarter century after his stunning work with John Coltrane, Jones can still dazzle with his drumming, shuffling cross rhythms as if they were so many cards in his hands. For his accompanying musicians, his vigor must create the sensation of playing in front of an oncoming D train. His brave and able band on this occasion includes bassist **CECIL MC BEE,** pianist **WILL PICKENS,** tenor saxophonist **GREG TARDY,** and trombonist **DELFEAYO MARSALIS,** of the famous family.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Brazilian singer **ASTRUD GILBERTO,** who immortalized "The Girl from Ipanema," brings her spicy-cool bossa-nova and samba stylings to the club on April 13-14. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. The **MICHAEL CARVIN** quintet is here through April 17. Carvin upholds the old adage that drummers make good bandleaders. He encourages his judiciously chosen sidemen to stretch out, while his whiplash accents enforce any necessary discipline. **JAVON JACKSON** starts on April 19. A big band belonging to **GIL GOLDSTEIN** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. The venerable pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN** is in through April 17. Beginning April 19: **DOROTHY DONEGAN.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The **PHAROAH SANDERS** quartet performs through April 17. Starting April 19: the **DAVID MURRAY** quartet. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **LYNNE ARRIALE, DREW GRESS,** and **STEVE DAVIS** appear through April 16. Beginning April 18: the **MILT HINTON** duo.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Talk about extended runs: the Algonquin booked **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** for sixteen weeks last year, and now she's back for another eleven. She'll be ranging through golden-age standards and more up-to-date material during April; in May, the engagement turns into an Irving Berlin tribute. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. Russian diva **MASHA** begins a two-week run on April 19. Cabaret legend **BLOSSOM DEARIE** presents an early show (6:30) on Friday and Saturday evenings.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, at the moment, designing woman **DIXIE CARTER,** continuing a two-week run. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. The rest of the week, **VERNEL BAGNERIS** presents "Hoo-Dude," his tribute to Jelly Roll Morton. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **ANNIE ROSS** will be here through April 23. In jazz circles, Ross is best known as one third of the innovative fifties vocal trio Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, but her long and varied career has also encompassed cabaret, theatre, and film. Her current act draws on all these credits, ranging from standards to songs from the soundtrack of the 1993 movie "Short Cuts," in which Ross portrayed an over-the-hill alcoholic jazz singer. Fortunately, at sixty-three, Ross herself is still in top form. Closed Mondays.

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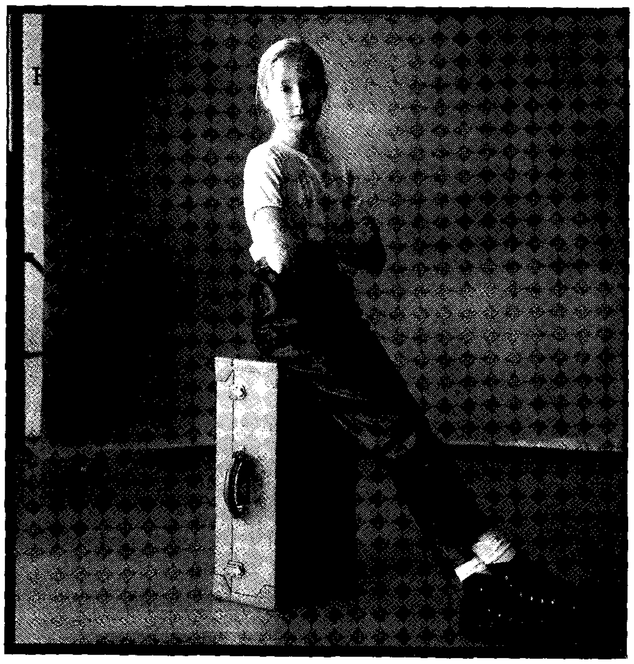

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ART

Knowing the Worst

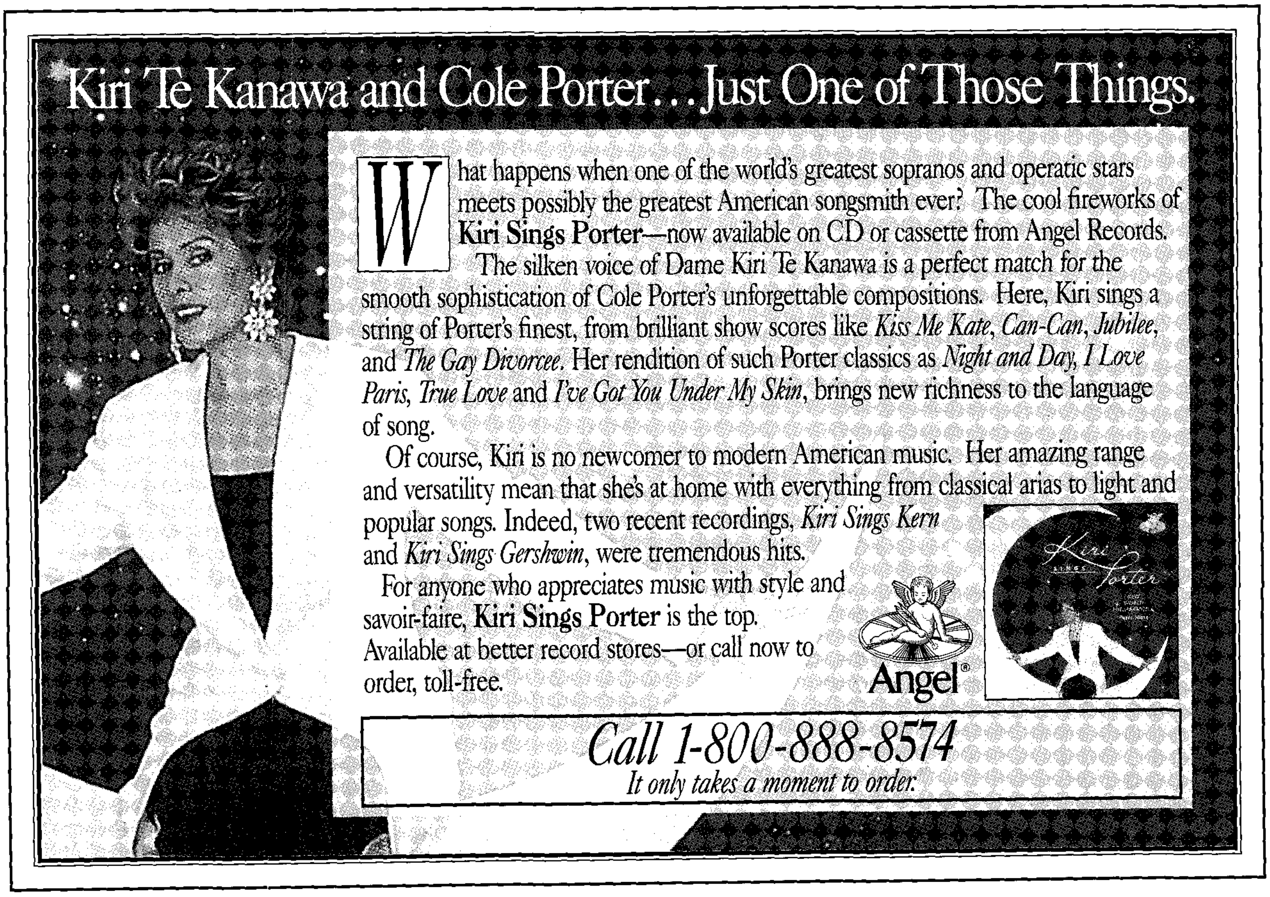
The Jewish Museum is currently presenting a remarkable exhibition called "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History." It chiefly uses documentary material—architectural models, designs, photographs, and video—to trace the development of these memorials in Europe, Israel, and the United States. Given the recent completion of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in Washington, D.C., and the success of "Schindler's List," this is a resonant moment for such a show. The timing also points up the problems of representation shared by all attempts to frame the incommensurable evil of Hitler's Final Solution.

Steven Spielberg employs a black-and-white, cinéma-vérité style that suggests archival footage and impresses a sense of authentic history on an audience presumably far removed from the original horror. In a very different vein, Claude Lanzmann's ten-hour documentary, "Shoah" (1985), eschews archival footage: the work of memory takes place in the present, with no recourse to images of the past. These two cinematic strategies illustrate aesthetic choices—narrative versus abstraction, passionate immediacy versus austere recollection—that confront us again and again in "The Art of Memory." Some of these tensions are apparent in the vivid contrast between the heroic figures in Nathan Rapoport's "Warsaw Ghetto Monument" (1948) and Adam Haupt and Franciszek Duszenko's "Treblinka Memorial" (1964), a field of shardlike boulders surrounding an obelisk. For nearly five decades, Holocaust memorial art has been in a state of flux, encompassing an enormous variety of styles and attitudes with a single intent. Ultimately, this show proposes the memorial as a place for remembering rather than a repository for memories—the site of ongoing and never finished projects of personal and collective historical reconstruction.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Eighteen new permanent galleries devoted to the art of South and Southeast Asia will open on April 13. Ancient India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia, among other nations and cultures, will be represented. . . . ¶ "Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges." A disciple of Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, who lived in the mid-fifteenth century, was one of the first Flemish painters to incorporate the Italian convention of one-point perspective. Opens April 14. . . . ¶ Twenty-seven paintings by Sidney Nolan (1917-92), an Australian who chronicled the adventures of his countryman Ned Kelly, a nineteenth-century outlaw. Opens April 19. . . . ¶ "Waist Not," a Costume Institute exhibit, proposes that the waist is the defining element of the fashion silhouette, offering examples from the eighteenth century to the present. . . . ¶ "The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum.) . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth by Caspar David Friedrich and Ferdinand Hodler, among others. Through April 24. . . . ¶ "The Golden Age of Danish Painting." Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersburg (1785-1853) and Christen Købke (1810-48) are represented by portraits and landscapes. Through April 24. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Selections from the museum's collection of American Surrealist photography, including work by Maya Deren, Clarence John Laughlin, George Platt Lynes, Frederick Sommer, Val Telberg, and Edmund Teske. Opens April 14. . . . ¶ The fourth exhibition in the Artist's Choice series features John Baldessari's images, based on details from photographic reproductions of works in the collection. Single original paintings by Henri Rousseau, Andy Warhol, and Andrew Wyeth, among others, are also on view. Through May 10. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with material from the eighteen-eighties. (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim Museum.) Through May 10. . . . ¶ "Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kan-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dinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. Through May 17. . . . ¶ The second in a two-part series of drawings by modern (1959-91) artists, both American and European. Marcel Broodthaers and Jasper Johns are included. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Women on the Edge: Twenty Photographers in Europe, 1910-39" provides an antidote to the many historical surveys that have overlooked women who contributed to this fertile, influential period in European photography. The variety of intentions (from advertising to art) and the heterogeneity of styles make for a wide-ranging tour of the era's dynamics, from the work of well-known photographers like Florence Henri and Lucia Moholy to pages from Irene Bayer's personal photo albums. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.) . . . ¶ "Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem," a retrospective exhibition, explores the intellectual underpinnings of this protean artist through a selection of his sculptures, drawings, and videos from the early sixties to the present. Morris's career touches on many of the important artistic developments of the last thirty years, confounding expectations of aesthetic unity or continuity. Through May 1. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Richard Avedon: Evidence 1944-94." This retrospective includes photographs of Isak Dinesen (1959) and Francis Bacon (1979). . . . ¶ "Collection in Context: A Year from the Collection Circa 1952." Some seventy-five paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs. Through April 17. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fine art ("Watson and the Shark," by John Singleton Copley), casts of fossils, and a sample of items that have been found in fishes' bellies—armor, hubcaps, a fur coat—are a few of the items in "Sharks! Fact and Fantasy." There's also a walk-through diorama with lighting and ambient sound that make you think you're underwater. Through May 1. . . . ¶ "Waura: Drawings of the Waura Indians of Brazil" is an exhibit of illustrations by Amazon tribesmen who were encouraged by an anthropologist to put onto paper images they traditionally use in body painting, pottery, basketry, and wood carving. Through April 24. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Selected works of Leon Polk Smith, an American abstract painter. . . . ¶ "Fantasy Furniture," an installation of fourteen pieces mostly from the nineteenth century. . . . ¶ Red Grooms' large-scale sculpture of the Staten Island Ferry arriving in Manhattan graces the museum's lobby. . . . ¶ An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ALTERNATIVE MUSEUM, 594 Broadway—"Komar & Melamid: People's Choice." After commissioning a poll of a thousand and one Americans about their preferences in art, these Russian artists have created a series of paintings that cater to the tastes reflected in the poll. Through April 23. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A thirty-eight-inch bronze Buddha from Thailand is the centerpiece of an exhibit of some fifty related sculptures. Opens April 13. . . . ¶ "Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian-American Art." The society's first exhibit of contemporary art includes paintings, sculptures, and photographs by twenty Asian-American artists. Of note is May Sun's "Fugitive Landing," an installation with English-language books about China on one side and, on the other side, a kind of Chinese fish pond cum trellis with wooden footpaths and video images of Sun Yat-sen. Self-portraits of Tseng Kwong Chi in a Mao Tse Tung jacket, posing in front of such American icons as the Statue of Liberty and Mickey Mouse, are startling and both funny and serious. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Beyond the Borders: Art by Recent Immigrants" features thirty artists from more than twenty countries. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-75." A trip down short-term-memory lane, documenting the rise of industrial designers, who became indispensable to the quenching of America's thirst for new products. The pink Formica kitchen display looks like a perky old magazine advertisement come to life. The docents should look like Stepford wives. . . . ¶ "Walter Crane: Design for Children." Crane (1845-1915), an English artist and contemporary of William Morris, is best known for his fairy-tale illustrations, which are included here, along with wallcoverings, textiles, and other decorative items. Through May 1. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

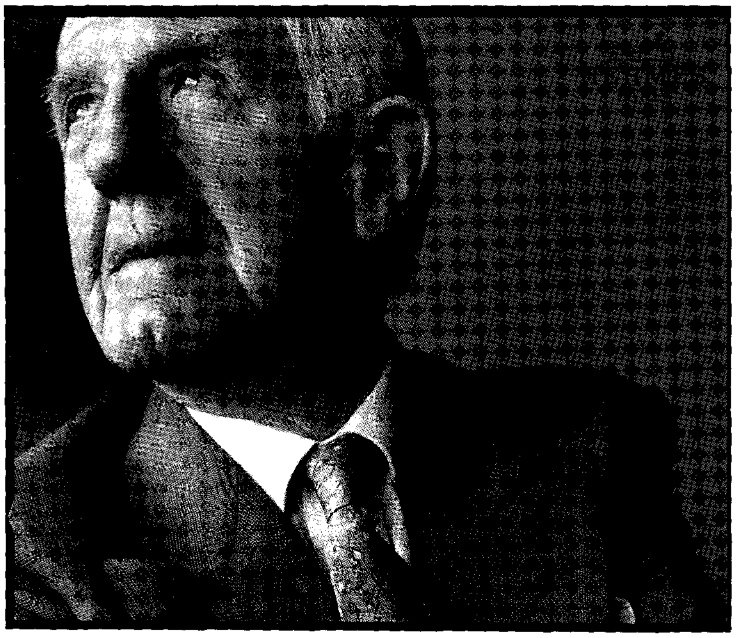
DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—A new project by the Irish artist James Coleman, involving slides and audiotapes, will be shown along with the first installment of a three-part retrospective of his work. Opens April 14. . . . ¶ Works by Katharina Fritsch, Dan Graham, and Ann Hamilton. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.) . . . ¶ At 393 West Broadway—Walter De Maria's "The Broken Kilometer." . . . ¶ At 141 Wooster St.—De Maria's "The New York Earth Room." (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St.—"The Great Tradition of Typography," an exhibit of books from the Updike Collection on Printing. Daniel Berkeley Updike (1867-1946), who founded Boston's Merrymount Press, intended this collection as a resource for printers and graphic designers. Through May 7. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St.—"Japan, A Cartographic Vision: European Printed Maps from the Early Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century." Some hundred and fifty maps and related material documenting European exploration and cartographers' renderings of the mysterious East. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Postcolonial Kinderhood." A bedroom installation by Elaine Reicheck, featuring twelve samplers embroidered with quotations about Jewish identity. . . . ¶ "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History." Through July 31. . . . ¶ A permanent



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Stanley is wearing one of his favorite ties from the collection he started in 1954.

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ART–Cont'd

exhibition called "Culture and Continuity" examines issues of identity, values, and culture. . . . ¶ An exhibit of Israeli art from the museum's collection, notably "Kaddish," a series of eight etchings by Moshe Gershuni. Through May 15. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale." Paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Mor Faye and Moustapha Dimé, of Senegal, and Tamessir Dia, Ouattara, and Gérard Santoni, of the Ivory Coast. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A roomful of portraits of solemn, straitlaced New Englanders by the highly successful portrait painter Ammi Phillips (1788-1865). Through April 17. . . . ¶ "Northern Scenes: Hooked Art of the Grenfell Mission." Hooked from strips of dyed silk and rayon, these decorative mats, made from standardized kits, depict walrus, polar bears, birds and fish, trappers and hunters. One of the best is a work by Rhoda Dawson depicting codfish laid out to dry. Through April 17. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Pride=Power!" marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, in which patrons of a gay bar resisted arrest and harassment, triggering a series of riots and demonstrations. The exhibit includes photographs of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Pride March, posters, pennants, T-shirts, and other mementos. Opens April 16. . . . ¶ "Modern Metropolis" includes more than two dozen vintage prints of New York, from the early part of this century. Opens April 16. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Artist's Eye: Wayne Thiebaud." The painter has selected more than fifty paintings from the Academy's collection. Fifteen of Thiebaud's own pictures will also be on exhibit. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Tracking the West: A. J. Russell Photographs of the Union Pacific Railroad" features work from the eighteen-sixties by Union Pacific's official photographer. Maps and illustrated books will also be on view. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"The House I Live In: American Performance in the Era of Blacklisting" documents the effect of blacklisting on the entertainment industry. The exhibit includes such publications as "Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television." Through May 14. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Anthony Caro—Monumental new works in steel and bronze, plus a group of smaller floor and table pieces, in a show celebrating the sculptor's seventieth birthday. Opens April 14. Through May 27. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Carolyn Plochmann—Paintings and watercolors with dreamlike imagery and ornamental detail suggestive of medieval tapestries. Opens April 16. Through May 7. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Jonathan Santlofer—Portraits of Judy Collins, Allan Gurganus, Melissa Meyer, and others. Opens April 16. Through May 14. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

American Masterworks—Nineteenth-century works from the collection of the New-York Historical Society. Opens April 13. Through June 18. (Equitable, 787 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. Open Mondays; open Saturdays at noon.)

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Julian Schnabel—Fans of messy yet grandiloquent painting should appreciate this neo-expressionist's most recent series, "Boni Lux" (that's Latin for "beautiful light," and it's rudely lettered on every canvas). Each painting incorporates as a collage element a bedraggled little flag or banner. Through April 23. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Milet Andrejevic (1925-89)—Neoclassical works on paper. Through April 30. (Stiebel Modern, 32 E. 57th St.)

Frank Auerbach—Close friends of the British artist sat for most of the portraits in this show. Through April 30. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Max Beckmann (1884-1950)—An excellent show of late paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by this renowned German Expressionist. Through May 14. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Katherine Bowling—Abstract and landscape paintings. Through May 7. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Jack Bush (1909-77)—Color-field paintings and works on paper from 1938 to 1976. Through April 30. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Sue Coe—Large mixed-medium drawings focussing on the artist's experiences at an AIDS ward in Galveston, Texas. Through May 27. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Helen Frankenthaler—Recent paintings on paper, by a preëminent Abstract Expressionist. Through April 28. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Ralph Goings—A retrospective of watercolors from 1972 to 1991 by a Photo-Realist painter fond of an American iconography that features roadside diners and pickup trucks. Through April 30. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Roni Horn—Large (some measuring more than seven feet long) abstract drawings, plus photographic suites of Iceland. Through April 30. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Larry Poons / Stephen Hannock—Recent paintings, in which the artist builds up a thick undersurface and then splashes it with buckets of paint. / Luminous paintings, featuring one that has occupied the artist for fifteen years, of the Connecticut River oxbow. Through April 30. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—Nature-inspired drawings and paintings from throughout the artist's career, in oil, silverpoint, pastel, and watercolor. Through May 27. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

Bill Traylor (1854-1947)—Watercolors and drawings of figures and animals, by an American folk artist. Through April 28. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Ursula von Rydingsvard—Sculptures made of cedar beams, and resembling architectural elements, household utensils, and agricultural tools. Through May 14. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

John Wilde—Paintings derived from the artist's forties sketchbooks, with his surreal speculations on physique and gender, fertility and death. Through April 30. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Bloomsbury"—Works by Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry, and other members of the celebrated British group. Through April 28. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

"Counterpoints: American Art 1930-45"—A review of trends of the era, including work by Charles Shaw, Pavel Tchelitchew, and Mark Tobey. Through June 4. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Portraits"—More than sixty portraits, ranging from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth, by Benjamin West, Childe Hassam, Philip Guston, and others. Through June 11. (IBM Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

20th Anniversary—The gallery's celebration includes work by Philip Guston, Katherine Porter, Martin Puryear, and William Tucker. Through May 14. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"With the Passage of Time . . ."—An early and a recent work each by William Baziotes, Grace Hartigan, and Milton Resnick, among others. Through May 27. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Joel Fisher—Abstract sculptures in various sizes and mediums, based on line drawings on handmade paper. Opens April 15. Through May 27. (Markey, 55 Vandam St. Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 2.)

Caio Fonseca—Abstract paintings with fragmented geometries, totemic forms, and ornamental marks. Opens April 16. Through May 7. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Lynn McCarty—Abstract oil paintings on Masonite, developed over an extended period. Opens April 16. Through May 21. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

John Okulick—Wooden wall sculptures constructed in ellipses, rectangles, and cones. Opens April 16. Through May 28. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Matthew Weinstein—Abstract paintings with suggestions of the human body. Opens April 16. Through May 14. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

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Cady Noland—A sprawling multimedia installation featuring images and texts appropriated from newspapers, which the artist has silk-screened on aluminum. Noland fusses over the detritus of the American cultural landscape. She seems particularly stuck on George and Martha Mitchell as gargoyles of the political unconscious. Through April 23. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Lily van der Stokker—Candy-colored murals and works on paper from an artist who apparently believes that important lessons may yet be learned from Peter Max. Van der Stokker traffics in inanity and has a good time doing it. Through April 23. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

Dottie Attie—Looking this time to Courbet's work, Attie has appropriated from the painting "Origin of the Universe" both the alienating image of the woman's faceless, aggressively nude torso and the story of how the work was privately commissioned by a wealthy Turkish patron. Attie's response is a series of works, each of which combines small, jewel-toned panels with stencilled pieces of narrative text. In one work, a central panel features the word "origin" floating over the image of Courbet's startled face (taken from a self-portrait), and the surrounding panels make up the truncated form of Courbet's nude. Attie's knowing juxtapositions of word and image—filled with visual puns and displacements—are both mysterious and compelling. Through April 23. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

William Copley—This collection of the artist's bawdy works from the past year, painted in his characteristically flat, cartoonish style, features an Everyman as voyeur. Primly dressed in a bowler hat and green plaid suit, he appears as a doctor, a cowboy, a boxer, etc., unable to resist the everyday temptations of the modern world—represented here by voluptuous blonde nudes with flagrant nipples. Having sprouted horns and satyr's legs in "Inspector General," his job is to measure the chest of a woman clad only in fishnet hose, who has the words "Inspected by #1" stamped on her derriere. Through April 30. (Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

Emma Amos—Figurative paintings addressing feminist, racial, and cultural-identity issues. Through April 30. (Art in General, 79 Walker St. Opens at noon.)

Sydney Blum / Mark Schwartz—Abstract constructions of felt, hair, and burlap, resembling shelters. / Expressionist canvases with abstract and landscape elements. Through April 30. (Bace, 39 Wooster St.)

Greg O'Halloran—Ranging from the pulsing speakers and gilded grenade of "Master Piece" to the black plastic gun aimed at "Shoot the Moon" (a painting), these over-the-top multimedia constructions evoke the video arcade. Through April 30. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Manuel Ocampo—"Stations of the Cross," fourteen paintings offering a humorous version of the Catholic ritual. Through April 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Peter Reginato—Seemingly free-floating painted-steel sculptures in bright colors. Through April 30. (395 West Broadway.)

A. Ruppersberg—A project concerned with the public and private experience of death, utilizing painting, drawing, and sculpture. Through April 30. (Gorney Modern, 100 Greene St.)

Doris Salcedo—An installation of clothing and furniture, alluding to the forced displacement of individuals and families. Through May 7. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Ronald Searle—Original drawings and watercolors. Through May 14. (Heineman, 594 Broadway.)

Doug and Mike Starn—"Spectroheliographs"—kinetic sculptures with film and light boxes—exploring the relationship between creationism and scientific explanations of existence. Through May 7. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Philip Taaffe—Heavily patterned abstractions. Through May 14. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"Drawing Towards a Distant Shore: Selections from Portugal"—Six artists spanning two generations. Through May 21. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St.)

"The Garden of Sculptural Delights"—An environmental installation by nine artists, inspired by the well-known Hieronymus Bosch painting. While its earthiness lacks the riotous human sensuality of the Bosch, the installation is unquestionably a delight, particularly Judy Pfaff's untitled piece in fibreglass, metals, and blown glass. With its tangle of pods, skeins, and webs from floor to ceiling, it looks like a living, breathing organism. Through April 23. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

"Sculpture 1880-1980"—The gallery has something of the atmosphere of a playground in this show of folk-art figures and animals. The funkiest piece is a pair of upholstered "Lady Derriere Chairs" (circa 1925-30), wearing a pair of red shorts and ruffled panties. Through April 30. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

"Waterworks"—A theme show, with artists ranging from Marsden Hartley to Malcolm Morley. Through May 7. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

ANTIQUES

Début Show—A new edition of the Park Avenue Antiques Show brings together fifty-five dealers, offering material from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. The gem is Edgar Allan Poe's own personal copy, annotated and signed, of his 1840 "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" ($260,000)—a great bedtime read. (Wallace Hall, Park Ave. at 84th St. April 15-16, from 11 to 8, and April 17, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

For Green Thumbs—Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century benches, Victorian chairs, weathervanes, fountains, urns, and collectible gardening books, ranging in price from fifty dollars to thousands of dollars, will be available at the Antique Garden Furniture Show and Sale at the New York Botanical Garden. (Bronx Park. April 15-17, from 10 to 5. No charge beyond garden admission.)

Post It—The International Vintage Poster Fair provides the chance to pick up affordable art (starting at $50) by, for example, Pierre Bonnard, Rob Moore, Jules Chéret, and Andy Warhol. (St. Moritz Hotel, 50 Central Park S. April 16, from 11 to 7, and April 17, from 11 to 6. Admission at the door on the days of the fair.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Arthur Elgort—A behind-the-scenes look at the world of professional waifs and other lanky goddesses. Through May 7. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

Annie Leibovitz—Landscapes, photographs from her recent trip to Sarajevo, and portraits of people with AIDS, by the high-profile photographer. Through April 16. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Cocaine True, Cocaine Blue." Through May 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War." Photographs by Carole Gallagher that document the victims of radioactive fallout in the Western United States. . . . ¶ Photographs of Northern New Mexico by Alex Harris. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, and the New York Public Library.)

Self-portrait by Annie Leibovitz.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Missing

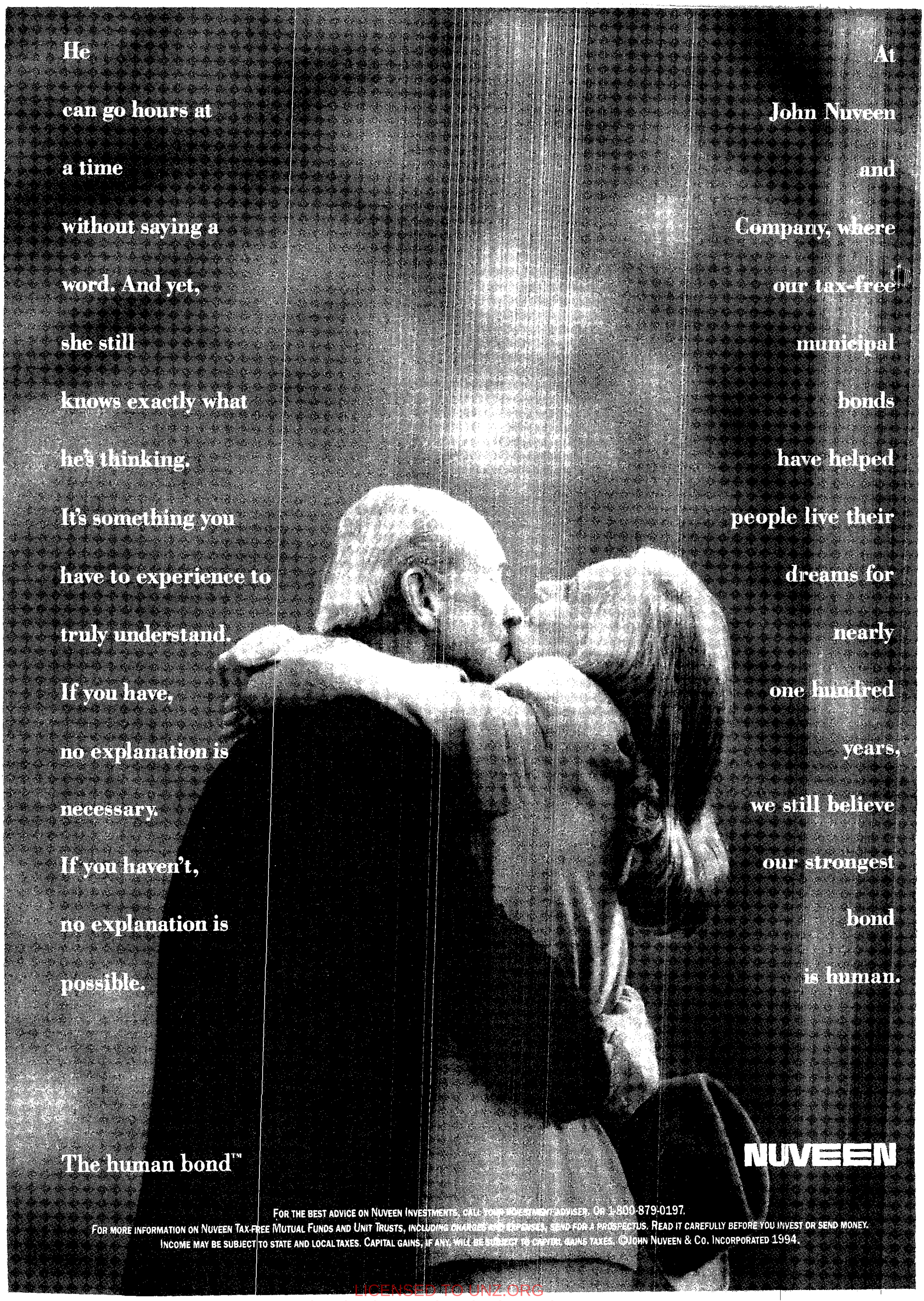
There are many examples of compositions designed to exploit the special capabilities of specific musicians, but it's hard to think of a piece written to heighten the audience's sense of a performer's absence. (The finale of Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony, where progressively diminishing forces represent departing musicians, takes a more generalized approach.) The pièce de résistance in soprano Benita Valente's April 17 recital at Alice Tully Hall—the New York première of William Bolcom's "Let Evening Come"—is precisely that: a composition inspired by, and explicitly reflecting, the loss of a memorable voice.

The piece was originally intended as a cycle of duets for Ms. Valente and her frequent collaborator the much-loved mezzo-soprano Tatiana Troyanos. Several texts were under consideration last August when Ms. Troyanos unexpectedly died of cancer. Instead of abandoning the project, Bolcom carried on by focussing his attention on three poems—by Maya Angelou, Emily Dickinson, and Jane Kenyon—that, he says, "describe with ever greater acceptance the phenomenon of death." The resulting cantata maintains the texture of a duet by employing a viola in place of the mezzo-soprano, though not as a simple replacement. Bolcom says, "The violist's role did not turn out to be a ghostly re-creation of Troyanos's spirit but, perhaps, that of choral commentator on the poems' events." Such voids, after all, are not to be filled; but they can echo with memories of living richness, and the lives they recall can still serve as potent inspiration.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**tosca**, with Maria Guleghina, Luciano Pavarotti, and James Morris; conducted by Christian Badea. (April 13 at 8 and April 16 at 1:30.) . . . With Sergej Larin as Cavaradossi. (April 18 at 8.) . . . **otello**, in a new production, with Renée Fleming, Vladimir Atlantov, and Timothy Noble; Adam Fischer. (April 14 at 8.) . . . With Carol Vaness, Vladimir Atlantov, and Sergei Leiferkus; Adam Fischer. (April 19 at 8.) . . . **aida**, with Sharon Sweet, Ghena Dimitrova, Lando Bartolini, and Leo Nucci; Samuel Cristler. (April 15 at 8.) . . . **ariadne auf naxos**, with Deborah Voigt, Tracy Dahl, Teresa Stratas, Wolfgang Schmidt, Hermann Prey; James Levine. (April 16 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. The season will end on April 23.)

He

can go hours at

a time

without saying a

word. And yet,

she still

knows exactly what

he's thinking.

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have to experience to

truly understand.

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no explanation is

necessary.

If you haven't,

no explanation is

possible.

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ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Juilliard Orchestra—Raymond Leppard conducts Ravel's "Rapsodie Espagnole," Harbison's Viola Concerto (featuring Nicholas Cords), and Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 7 (the "Sinfonia Antartica," with soprano Darlene Bennett Johnson). (Avery Fisher Hall. April 13 at 8.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Schubert's "Rosamunde" Overture, Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, and Reger's Piano Concerto (featuring Peter Serkin). (Carnegie Hall. April 13-14 at 8.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts music from film scores, by Villa-Lobos, Walton, Copland, Bernstein, Shostakovich, Corigliano, Ennio Morricone, and Silvestre Revueltas; with soprano Angelina Réaux. (Alice Tully Hall. April 14 at 7:30, with a pre-concert conversation beginning at 6:30.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts mid-twentieth-century works by African-American and Jewish-American composers: Ulysses Kay's "A Short Overture," Morton Gould's "Spirituals," Florence Price's Symphony No. 1, Gershwin's "'I Got Rhythm' Variations" (with pianist Marcus Roberts), Louis Gruenberg's "Harlem Rhapsody," and Ellington's "Night Creature" (for jazz band and orchestra). (Avery Fisher Hall. April 15 at 7:30.)

Concordia Orchestra—Marin Alsop leads her chamber orchestra in symphonic works by Jon Deak, Richard Danielpour, Barber (his "Capricorn Concerto"), George Bogatko, and John Corigliano (the New York première of his "Troubadours" for guitar and chamber orchestra, featuring classical guitarist Sharon Isbin). (Alice Tully Hall. April 16 at 8.)

National Chorale—Martin Josman directs Bach's B-Minor Mass. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 16 at 8.)

Liège Philharmonic—Pierre Bartholomée conducts Hindemith's "Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 (featuring Ory Shihor), and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade." (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. April 16 at 8.) . . . ¶ Britten's "Les Illuminations" (with soprano Barbara Hendricks) replaces the Beethoven. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 17 at 3.)

City Island Chamber Ensemble—Cellist Iris Regev is spotlighted in Haydn's C-Major and D-Major Cello Concertos. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. April 17 at 11 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony—Kenneth Klein conducts Bach's G-Minor Harpsichord Concerto (featuring Elaine Comparone), Grieg's "Holberg Suite," and a selection of spirituals (with soprano Esther Hinds and the choral group Voices Saintpaulia). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 17 at 3.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss directs the chorus and period-instrument ensemble in an all-Schütz program that includes motets, solo cantatas, and the "Musikalische Exequien." (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 794-3636. April 17 at 7.)

Clarion Concerts—Newell Jenkins directs a wide-ranging concert of Baroque music, including vocal and instrumental works by Monteverdi, Biagio Marini, Rosenmüller, Purcell, Agostino Steffani, and Handel; with soloists Julianne Baird (soprano), D'Anna Fortunato (mezzo-soprano), Steven Tharp (tenor), and Nathaniel Watson (baritone). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 18 at 8.)

Brass Bands—The optimistically named First Annual International Festival of Brass Bands convenes with a concert shared by New York's Gramercy Brass and the Hawthorn City Band of Victoria, Australia. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 18 at 8.)

Sharon Isbin, with the Concordia Orchestra, at Alice Tully Hall.

MAXINE HENRYSON

Dresden Staatskapelle—At Carnegie Hall, Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting. April 18 at 8: Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht" and Brahms' Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ April 19 at 8: Wagner's "Lohengrin" Overture, Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, and Schumann's Symphony No. 4.

RECITALS

Guarneri Quartet—Performing Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga's D-Minor String Quartet, Karel Husa's "Evocations of Slovakia," and Franck's Piano Quintet; assisted by clarinettist Charles Neidich and pianist Garrick Ohlsson. (Alice Tully Hall. April 13 at 8.)

Anthony Newman—Performing Franck's twelve major organ works, as well as compositions by Liszt, Widor, and Vierne. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 249. April 13 at 8.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—The ensemble concludes its survey of the string quartets of Schumann and Brahms by playing Schumann's Quartets in A Minor (Op. 41, No. 1) and in A Major (Op. 41, No. 3) and Brahms' Quartet in B-Flat Major (Op. 67). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 13 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Giovanni Bottesini's "Grand Duo Concertant" (for violin, double bass, and piano), Beethoven's D-Major Piano Trio, and Dvořák's G-Major String Quintet; with violinists Ik-Hwan Bae and Nai-Yuan Hu, violist Paul Coletti, cellist Alban Gerhardt, double bassist Timothy Cobb, and pianist David Oei. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 14 at 6:30 and April 17 at 4; the Thursday performance is a dinner-concert to honor Bargemusic's redoubtable founder and captain, Olga Bloom.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Performing Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 6, Fauré's "La Bonne Chanson" (with baritone Sanford Sylvan), and Mozart's D-Major String Quintet (K. 593). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 14 at 8.)

Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Ensembles—The conclusion of a mini-festival at Merkin Concert Hall. Performers include the Amernet String Quartet, the Percussion Group, and pianist James Tocco. April 14 at 8: Morton Subotnick's "Music for Three Imaginary Ballets." . . ¶ April 16 at 8:30: String quartets by Berg and Beethoven (in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3), as well as Schumann's Piano Quintet.

American Festival of Microtonal Music—A wide-ranging program employing non-traditional tuning systems, including works by John Cage, Harry Partch, and microtonal pioneer Mordecai Sandberg. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University; enter at Broadway and 116th St. April 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 517-3550.)

Juilliard Percussion Ensemble—Presenting works by Poul Ruders, Olav Anton Thomessen, Per Nørgård, Lasse Thoresen, and Rolf Wallin. (Alice Tully Hall. April 15 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing trios by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 1, No. 2), Arensky, and Mendelssohn (in D Minor). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 15-16 at 8.) . . . ¶ Performing Hummel's G-Major Trio (Op. 65), David Baker's "Roots II," and Schubert's Trio in B-Flat Major. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. April 17 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Mandolin Mania—The art of mandolinistry will come to the fore as plucking practitioners descend on New York for a weekend of performances, exhibits, merchandising, and camaraderie, not to mention seminars on such hot topics as "History of American Mandolin" and "Great Mandolin Personalities of New York." Most events take place April 16 at the Omni Park Central Hotel, Seventh Ave. at 56th St. For information, call 1-301 530-1749. On April 17 at 3, luminary mandolinists will converge on Merkin Concert Hall for a concert of original works and arrangements for soloists and ensembles. (Tickets are available through the box office.)

Andreas Haefliger—Pianist, performing Beethoven's Sonata in A-Flat Major (Op. 26), Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Scriabin's Sonata No. 6, nine pieces from Gubaidulina's "Musical Toys," and a group of preludes and études-tableaux by Rachmaninoff. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 16 at 8.)

Ridge Ensemble and Cynthia Raim—The string players and the pianist perform piano quartets by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 16) and Fauré (in C Minor), as well as Dohnányi's C-Major Serenade. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Place at 16th St. April 16 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Schubertiade—The sixth (and, one suspects, last) installment of what was projected to be a decade-long survey of *le tout* Schubert. This year's programs deal with themes of death and wandering in Schubert's music. April 17, from 1 to 6: Relevant lectures, with musical illustration. Pianist David Owen Norris's opening discussion and performance of Liszt's extended fantasy on Schubert's "Winterreise" promises to be a highlight. . . . At 8: Baritone Hermann Prey and pianist Leonard Hokanson perform "Die Winterreise." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Further events continue through April 28.)

Benita Valente—The soprano performs songs by Schumann and Debussy, a group from

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Wolf's "Italienisches Liederbuch," and the première of Bolcom's cantata "Let Evening Come"; with pianist Cynthia Raim and violist Michael Tree. (Alice Tully Hall. April 17 at 3.)

Partita Chamber Ensemble—Performing Lutoslawski's "Dance Preludes," Arensky's Piano Trio, Beethoven's Piano and Winds Quintet, and Charles Stanford's Nonet. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. April 17 at 3.)

Christopher Creaghan—Organist, playing works by Lübeck, Bach, Liszt, Messiaen, and others. (St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. April 17 at 4.)

Aspen Wind Quintet—Performing Barber's "Summer Music," Ligeti's Six Bagatelles, and the première of a new composition by Paquito d'Rivera, among other works. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. April 17 at 5.)

O'Brien–Cinelli Guitar Duo—Classical guitarists/lutenists Patrick O'Brien and Dennis Cinelli perform music by Fernando Sor, Kaspar Joseph Mertz, Ferdinando Carulli, and others. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. April 17 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Krystian Zimerman—The theme-and-variations form is saddled with a somewhat sullied reputation in the keyboard repertoire; centuries' worth of facile, predictable sets of variations on facile, predictable tunes immensely outnumber such occasional summits of achievement as the "Goldbergs" or the "Diabellis." In this concert, the imaginative Polish pianist explores the variety of theme-and-variations forms as evinced by Bach's C-Minor Passacaglia (in the performer's own transcription), Mendelssohn's "Variations Sérieuses," Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," Webern's "Variations for Piano," and Szymanowski's B-Minor Variations. Rounding out the program is a set of "Seven Easy Variations" written by the twelve-year-old Schubert, recently discovered and here receiving its first modern performance. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 17 at 7:30.)

Carlo Bergonzi—The distinguished tenor, whose international career has spanned more than four decades, bids farewell to his American public with a recital of works by Bellini, Verdi, and others; with pianist Vincenzo Scalera. Presented by Opera Orchestra of New York. (Carnegie Hall. April 17 at 8.)

Ellen Orner—Violinist, performing sonatas by Benjamin Lees, Debussy, and Ysaÿe, as well as works by Tchaikovsky and Paganini; with pianist Joel Wizansky. (Weill Recital Hall. April 17 at 8:30.)

Mari Kimura—Violinist, performing works that employ an extended, avant-garde technique; including compositions of her own, as well as music by Cage, Salvatore Sciarrino, Nancarrow, Berio, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and Davidovsky. Presented by the League of Composers/ISCM. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 19 at 8.)

St. Lawrence String Quartet—Performing quartets by Schoenberg (his Third), Mendelssohn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 12), and Schumann (his Third). (Alice Tully Hall. April 19 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Musical Notes—A Little Orchestra Society "Happy Concert for Young People," with the Canadian Brass as guest artists. Recommended ages: six to twelve. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 16 at 11 and 1.) . . . ¶ Music and dance of Ireland, performed by Mick Moloney, Eileen Ivers, Donny Golden & the Golden School of Irish Dance, and Kimati Dinizulu, among others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 16 at 3.)

Improv—Audience suggestions provide the material for the Freestyle Repertory Theatre's performance of stories, poems, songs, and skits. Recommended ages: five and older. (Artsconnection, 120 W. 46th St. 302-7433. April 17 at 2.)

Museumgoers—A tour at the Whitney focusses on sculptures and drawings in the "Ideas *and Objects" exhibit. A hands-on activity* will follow. Recommended ages: five to ten. (Madison Ave. at 76th St. April 16, from 9 to 11. Pre-registration is required; call 606-0211.) . . . ¶ Design is the name of the game when MOMA's Family Gallery Program takes a look at the museum's chair collection. (Noble Education Center, 18 W. 54th St. 708-9400. April 16, from 10 to 11.)

Keep in Mind—The Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus at Madison Square Garden. (465-6000. Through May 1.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

For Norteamericanos—April 16-17, from 1 to 4:30: Contemporary and traditional Argentine dance, with Los Pampas. . . . April 17 at 2 and 4: The musical group Frescura Antigua will perform on traditional Andean instruments and show slides about Latin America. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5315.)

Seeing the Trees—The Sierra Club and Columbia University's Harriman Institute are co-sponsoring a two-day "Global Forest Summit," on April 16-17, which will focus on solutions to the destruction of forests worldwide. For more information, call 854-8487.

On the Air—Guitarist Chet Atkins, pianist-songwriter Dave Frishberg, and the Hopeful Gospel Quartet will make music with the Lake Wobegon bard, Garrison Keillor, on the April 16 "Prairie Home Companion" broadcast, beginning at 5:45. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. For tickets, call 307-7171.)

Fish Tales—The shad are passing through on their annual migration up the Hudson. To honor this cousin of the herring, the Annual Shad Festival, April 17, from noon to 4, will include a performance of a play, "Secret Lives of the Estuary"; Q.&A. sessions with sailors and fishermen; a taste of shad prepared Iroquois style (on planks, laid fireside on rocks); and music of the Iroquois nations, performed by the Four Wind Singers, who will also do a fish dance. (Riverside Park at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

Full of Grace—Village stalwart Grace Paley will give two free readings from her "Collected Stories." April 14 at 7: Three Lives and Company, 154 W. 10th St., at Waverly Pl. . . . ¶ April 19 at 7:30: Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St.

Crown Heights—Three Brooklyn museums present the Crown Heights History Project, developed as a response to unrest and misperception in that neighborhood. The Brooklyn Children's Museum exhibit "The Inside Scoop" will look at the public and private lives of the ethnic groups that call Crown Heights home. (145 Brooklyn Ave. 1-718 735-4400.) . . . ¶ "Perceptions and Realities," at the Brooklyn Historical Society, will focus on common stereotypes and how they affect the reality of living in the neighborhood. (128 Pierrepont St. 1-718 624-0890.) . . . ¶ "The African Diaspora," at the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant History, will trace the lives of typical inhabitants from four decades. (1698 Bergen St. 1-718 756-5250.)

Readings—April 13 at 7: A reading from "Post-Modern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology," with Kenneth Koch, Bernadette Mayers, and others. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ April 13 at 8: Louis Begley will read from his newest novel, "As Max Saw It." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 14 at 7:30: April Bernard, Elizabeth Cohen, and Lawrence Joseph will read from their own poetry. (Ceres Gallery, 584 Broadway. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ April 15 at 7: E. L. Doctorow will read from his forthcoming novel, "The Waterworks." (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 16 at 8: Laurie Anderson will read from her new novel, "Stories from the Nerve Bible." (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Square and LaGuardia Pl. 998-4999.). . . ¶ April 18 at 8: Michelle Cliff and Honor Moore will read from their own poetry. (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 18 at 8: Robert Fagles and David Ferry will read from their respective translations of The Iliad and the Gilgamesh epic. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ April 19 at 8: Daniel Halpern and Mark Strand will read from their own poetry. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—April 13 at 6: Blanche Wiesen Cook will give a talk titled "Eleanor Roosevelt and Her Lesbian Friends: Politics, Love, and Power." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ April 14 at 7:45: Jonas Mekas and Billy Name will talk about Andy Warhol's early movies. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walks & Tours—April 17 at 3: Two hundred years ago, pigpens, orchards, and carriage houses dotted Manhattan's Upper East Side. The Abigail Adams Smith Museum will offer a tour of converted carriage houses. For more information, call 838-6878. . . . ¶ The Tram Artlink, with connections to Roosevelt Island and Queens art venues, has started up again. Weekends, from 1 to 5, trams leave from 59th St. and Second Ave. Stops include the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum and the Socrates Sculpture Park. For more information, call 832-4540, ext. 386.

SPORTS

Spring Squash—Virtually all the top-ranked squash players, including Nos. 1, 2, and 3—Jansher Khan and the Australian brothers Brett and Rodney Martin—will compete in the sixth annual Lehman Brothers Tournament of Champions. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park. April 13-21. For ticket and schedule information, call 1-718 488-7764.)

His and Hers—In the Trevira Twosome, a ten-mile Central Park race, each runner is paired with a member of the opposite sex. This year's buddy system matches up wide receiver Lynn Swann with marathoner Grete Waitz for the second year in a row. Two-time Trevira winner Eamonn Coghlan will take to the track with designer Nicole Miller. The fastest combined time wins. (Race begins on the west side of the park, at 67th St. April 16 at 10:30. For more information, call 860-4455.)

HOME TEAMS

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

Knicks—Vs. the Washington Bullets, April 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, April 19. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Detroit Pistons, April 15 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, April 14 at 7:30.

Devils—Vs. the Ottawa Senators, April 14 at 7:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Seattle Mariners, April 19 at 7:05.

Mets—Vs. the Chicago Cubs, April 13-14 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Astros, April 15 at 7:40, and April 16-17 at 1:40.

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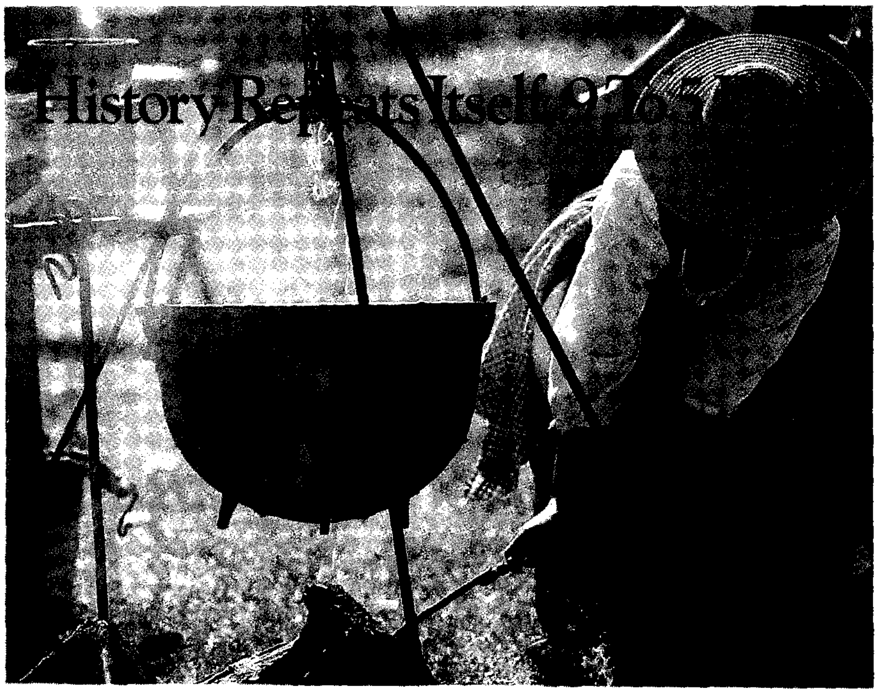

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THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			13	14	15	16
17	18	19				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 29.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Naked" (directed by Mike Leigh), with David Thewlis. From April 15: "Backbeat" (Iain Softley).
Theatre 2: "Suture" (Scott McGehee and David Siegal).
Theatre 3: "Cronos" (Guillermo del Toro, in English and Spanish).
Theatre 4: "Savage Nights" (Cyril Collard, in French), with Collard.
Theatre 5: "Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.
Theatre 6: "The House of the Spirits" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through April 14: "It's Happening Tomorrow" (Daniele Luchetti, in Italian).
From April 15: "I Only Want You to Love Me" (1976, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson). From April 15: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender), with Warwick Davis.

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 2: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (†).
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 4: Through April 14: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†). From April 15: "Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant).
Theatre 5: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).
Theatre 6: "Major League II" (†).
Theatre 7: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Red Rock West" (John Dahl), with Nicolas Cage, Dennis Hopper, Lara Flynn Boyle, and J. T. Walsh.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Belle Époque" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 14: "Monkey Trouble" (Franco Amurri). From April 15: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).
Theatre 3: Through April 14: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty), with Martin Short and Charles Grodin. From April 15: "In Custody" (Ismail Merchant, in Urdu).
Theatre 4: "D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman).
Theatre 5: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (Lasse Hallström), with Johnny Depp and Juliette Lewis.
Theatre 6: Through April 14: "The Ref" (Ted Demme). From April 15: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).
Theatre 7: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 14 "Philadelphia" (†). From April 15: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).
Theatre 3: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).
Theatre 4: "Major League II" (†).
Theatre 5: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).
Theatre 6: Through April 14: "D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman). From April 15: "Backbeat" (Iain Softley).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).
Theatre 2: "Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.
Theatre 3: Through April 14: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson). From April 15: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie).
Theatre 4: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).
Theatre 2: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 3: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Belle Époque" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).
Theatre 2: Through April 14: "D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman). From April 15: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams and Sally Field.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through April 14: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
From April 15: "In Custody" (Ismail Merchant, in Urdu).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty).
Theatre 2: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "Bitter Moon" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 5: Through April 14: "In the Name of the Father." From April 15: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Major League II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through April 14: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson), with Nicolas Cage and Shirley MacLaine.
From April 15: "Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant), with Eric Stoltz.

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 2: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.

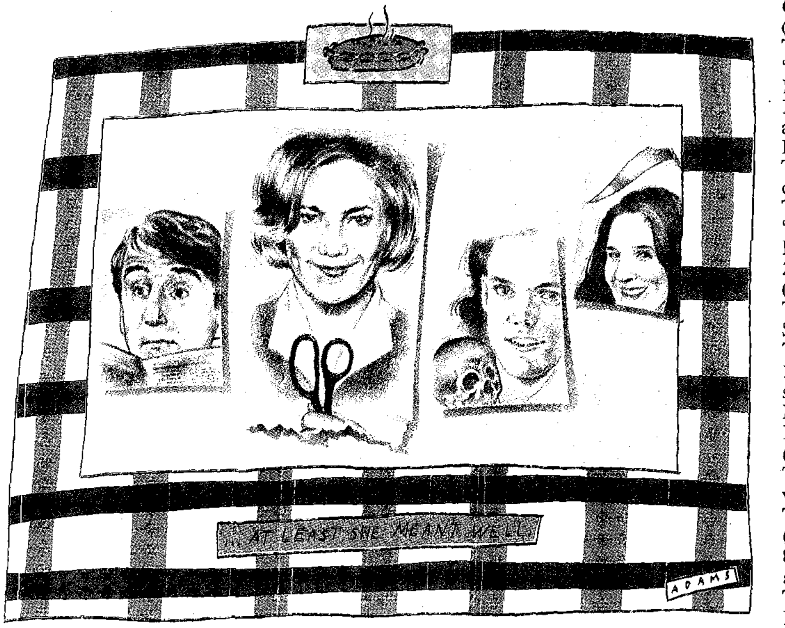
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through April 14: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (†).
From April 15: "Backbeat" (Iain Softley).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Paper" (†).
Theatre 2: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender), with Warwick Davis. From April 15: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie).
Theatre 2: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 3: Through April 14: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty). From April 15: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).
Theatre 4: "The House of the Spirits" (†).
Theatre 5: Through April 14: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth), an animated film. From April 15: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).
Theatre 6: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†).
Theatre 7: "Major League II" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 2: "D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman), with Emilio Estevez.


AT LEAST SHE MEANS WELL
ADAMS

Opening April 13, Sam Waterston, Kathleen Turner, Matthew Lillard, and Ricki Lake in "Serial Mom."

LISA ADAMS

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb" (directed by Dave Borthwick).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish). From April 15: "Two Small Bodies" (Beth B).
Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 3: "Bitter Moon" (†).
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Paper" (†).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (†).
Theatre 6: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†).
Theatre 7: "Schindler's List" (†)
Theatre 8: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 9: "The House of the Spirits" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth) and "The Ref" (Ted Demme). From April 15: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).
Theatre 2: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender).
Theatre 3: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Jimmy Hollywood" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "The Pelican Brief" (Alan J. Pakula).
Theatre 5: "Tombstone" (George Cosmatos).
Theatre 6: "Blink" (Michael Apted).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Paper" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (†).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Cronos" (Guillermo del Toro, in English and Spanish).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Germinal" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Reality Bites" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "A Tale of Winter" (†).
Theatre 2: April 13: "Fiorile" (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, in Italian). From April 14: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (†).
Theatre 3: "Ivan and Abraham" (Yolande Zauberman, in Yiddish).
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Blue Kite" (Tian Zhuangzhuang, in Mandarin).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).
Theatre 2: "Major League II" (†).
Theatre 3: Through April 14: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender). From April 15: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).
Theatre 4: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (†).
Theatre 5: Through April 14: "Jimmy Hollywood" (†). From April 15: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).
Theatre 6: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).

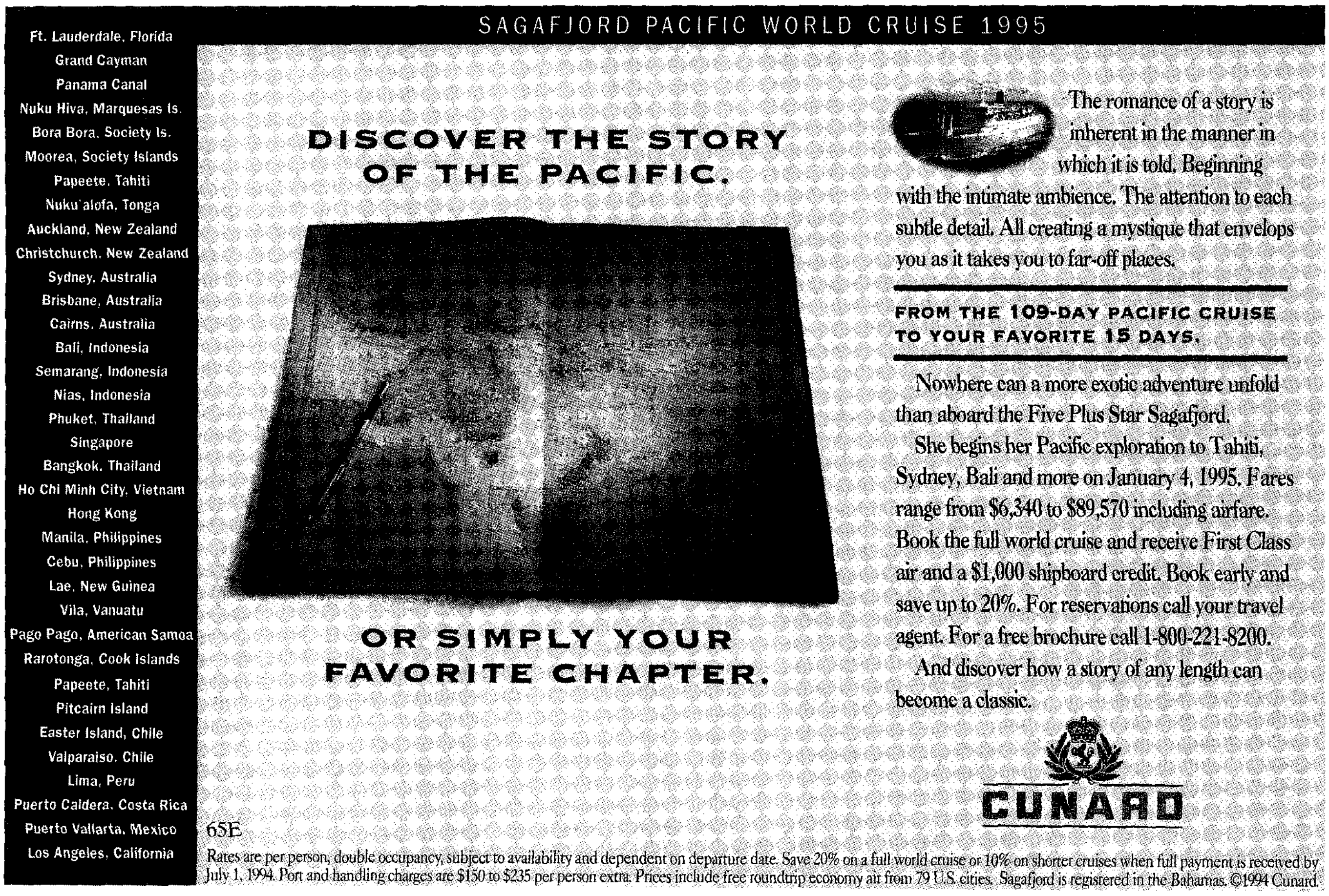
Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Bitter Moon" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty).
Theatre 2: "D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman), with Emilio Estevez.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).
Theatre 2: "Monkey Trouble" (Franco Amurri) and "Above the Rim."

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through April 14: "Monkey Trouble" (directed by Franco Amurri) and "Above the Rim." From April 15: "Serial Mom" (John Waters).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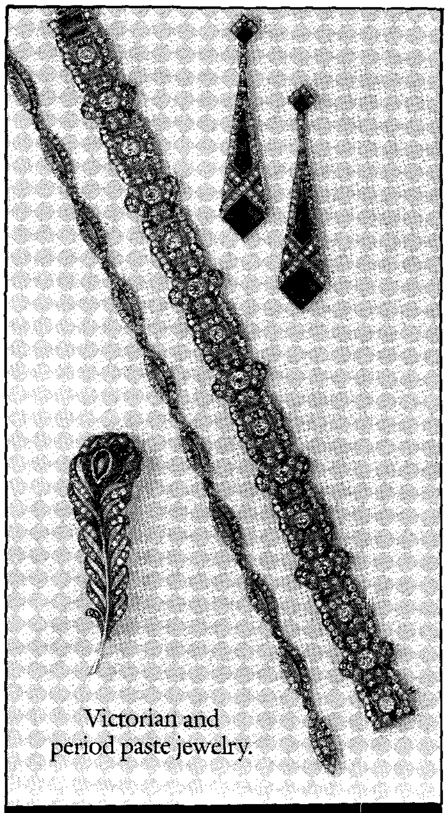

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

Theatre 2: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack).
Theatre 3: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 4: Through April 14: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal). From April 15: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie).
Theatre 5: "Major League II" (†).
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: Through April 14: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth) and "Mother's Boy" (Yves Simoneau). From April 15: "Surviving the Game" (Ernest Dickerson).

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"D2: The Mighty Ducks" (Sam Weisman), with Emilio Estevez.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Clifford" (Paul Flaherty),.
Theatre 2: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright) and "Angie" (Martha Coolidge).

ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult" (†).

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender).
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).

REVIVAL HOUSES

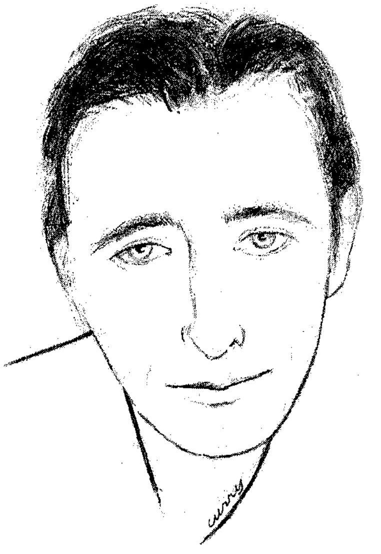
FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through April 14: "Blue" (1993, directed by Derek Jarman).
April 15-17: "The Merry Widow" (1925, Erich von Stroheim; silent).
April 18-19: "He Who Gets Slapped" (1924, Victor Sjöström; silent) and "The Scarlet Letter" (†).

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
April 13: "The Conversation" (1974, Francis Ford Coppola) and "Scarecrow" (1973, Jerry Schatzberg).
April 14: "The 39 Steps" (1935, Alfred Hitchcock) and "Sabotage" (†).
April 15-16: "Interiors" (1978, Woody Allen) and "Love and Death" (1975, Allen).
April 17: "Stolen Kisses" (1968, François Truffaut; in French) and "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977, Truffaut; in French).
April 18: "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned"; 1950, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish) and "Viridiana" (1961, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish).
April 19: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich) and "Paper Moon" (1973, Bogdanovich).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 14 at 2:30: "Bizet's Carmen" (1984, directed by Francesco Rosi; in French). . . . ¶ April 14 at 3 and 6: "Made in Brooklyn" (1993, Isabel Hill). . . . ¶ April 14 at 6: "Betty Blue" (1986, Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French). . . . ¶ April 15 at 2 and April 17 at 5: "Monologue" (1973, Ilya Averbach; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 15 at 6 and April 17 at 2: "Declaration of Love" (1978, Averbach; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 16 at 1 and April 18 at 2:30: "Tragedy of Another Time" (1972, Averbach; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 16 at 2:30: "Sammy Going South" (1963, Alexander Mackendrick). . . . ¶ April 16 at 3 and April 18 at 6: "Other People's Letters" (1976, Averbach; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 16 at 5 and April 19 at 2:30: "Degree of Risk" (1969, Averbach; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 16 at 5: "Topaze" (†). . . . ¶ April 17 at 2:30: "Tight Little Island" ("Whisky Galore"; 1949, Mackendrick). . . . ¶ April 17 at 5: Two short films by Paul Sharits. . . . ¶ April 18 at 3: "Mandy" (1952, Mackendrick). . . . ¶ April 18 at 6:30: A program of films by Peter Hutton, who will be present.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—A program of films from Africa. April 13 at 2 and 6:30: "Sababu" (1992, Nissy Joanny Traoré). . . . ¶ April 13 at 4:15 and 8:30 and April 15 at 10: "Heritage Africa" (1989, Kwah Ansah). . . . ¶ April 14 at 2 and 6 and April 15 at 4 and 8: "Laada" (1991, Drissa Touré). . . . ¶ April 14 at 4 and April 15 at 2 and 6: "Tilai" (1990, Idrissa Ouedraogo) and "Denko" (1992, Mohamed Camara). . . . ¶ April 16 at 2, 5:15, and 10 and April 18 at 4: "Mapantsula" (1988, Thomas Mogotlane and Oliver Schmitz). . . . ¶ April 16 at 4 and April 17 at 6:30: "Jim Comes to Jo'Burg" (1949, Donald Swanson). . . . ¶ April 16 at 7:30, April 17 at 4 and 8, and April 18 at 2: "These Hands" (1992, Flora M'mbugu-Schelling) and "Shida and Matatizo" (1993, M'mbugu-Schelling). . . . ¶ April 17 at 2 and April 19 at 2 and 6:30: "Wend Kuuni" (1982, Gaston Kaboré). . . . ¶ April 18 at 6:15 and 9: "In Darkest Hollywood: Cinema & Apartheid" (1992, Peter Davis and Daniel Riesenfield). . . . ¶ April 19 at 4 and 9: "Monday's Girls" (1993, Ngozi Onwurah) and "Fire Eyes" (1993, Soraya Mire).



At Symphony Space, films by Hal Hartley.

CHRIS CURRY

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A retrospective of films starring Joan Crawford. April 17 at 2: "Dancing Lady" (1933, Robert Z. Leonard). . . . ¶ April 17 at 4: "Sadie McKee" (1934, Clarence Brown).

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films by American independent filmmakers. April 19 at 7: "The Unbelievable Truth" (1990, Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and Adrienne Shelly. . . . ¶ April 19 at 8:45: "Trust" (1991, Hartley), with Shelly and Martin Donovan.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 13 at 12:30 and 6: "The Puritan" (†). . . . ¶ April 13 at 3:15 and 8:45: "The Testament of Dr. Cordelier" (1959, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean-Louis Barrault.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—April 13 at 7 and 9: "The Exiles" (1989, Richard Kaplan). . . . ¶ April 14 at 7 and 9: A program of films by Jonas Mekas. . . . ¶ April 15 at 8, April 16 at 7 and 9:30, and April 17 at 4: Four different programs of films originally shown at Cinema 16. . . . ¶ April 15 at 10 and April 17 at 6: "The Rock Summer" (1990, Sishyphus). . . . ¶ April 16 at 2: "Saturday Night, Sunday Morning: The Travels of Gatemouth Moore" (1994, Louis Guida). . . . ¶ April 16 at 4: "Pulse: Reels 109-114" (1991, Yasunori Yamamoto). . . . ¶ April 17 at 8: "Annie Sprinkle" (1984, Michel Auder) and "Christmas on Earth" (1963, Barbara Rubin). . . . ¶ April 17 at 9:30: A program of short films by Lewis Jacobs. . . . ¶ April 19 at 7 and 9: "Luck, Trust & Ketchup: Robert Altman in Carver Country" (1994, Mike Kaplan and John Dorr).

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films by Andy Warhol. Call for schedule and screening times.

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—A retrospective of Shiro Toyoda films. April 15 at 6:30: "The Young" (1937). . . . ¶ April 16 at 1: "Spring on the Islands" (1940).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Backbeat—Director Iain Softley's first feature is a chronicle of the Beatles' early years, in Hamburg, and the band's relationship with Astrid Kirchherr, who helped define their style. With Ian Hart as John Lennon, Stephen Dorff as Stu Sutcliffe, and Sheryl Lee as Kirchherr. Don Was supervised the musical re-creations, which are performed by Dave Pirner, Thurston Moore, Mike Mills, and others. Opening April 15.

Cops and Robbersons—Chevy Chase and his suburban family drive their house guest—Jack Palance, an undercover cop assigned to catch a local mobster (Robert Davi)—crazy. Also with Dianne Wiest. Directed by Michael Ritchie. Opening April 15.

In Custody—An obscure lecturer in an Indian town gets a chance to interview a preëminent Urdu poet and dreams of fame, only to face a nightmare reality. With Shashi Kapoor and Om Puri. From the novel by Anita Desai. Directed by Ismail Merchant. In Urdu. Opening April 15.

I Only Want You to Love Me—Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1976 film about an unloved child who grows into a compulsive adult. With Vitus Zeplichal and Elke Aberle. Based on the book "Life Sentence," by Klaus Antes and Christine Erhardt. In German. Opening April 15.

Naked in New York—Eric Stoltz as a would-be playwright desperately seeking love and other forms of success. With Mary-Louise Parker, Jill Clayburgh, Ralph Macchio, Tony Curtis, Kathleen Turner, and Timothy Dalton. Directed by Dan Algrant. Opening April 15.

The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb—A futuristic version of the old tale (the tiny lad is born after a fertility-lab accident), using 3-D stop-motion animation and pixilation of live actors. The music is by John Paul Jones. Directed by Dave Borthwick. Opening April 13.

Serial Mom—John Waters wrote and directed this black comedy about a devoted mom (Kathleen Turner) who will do anything to insure her family's happiness. With Sam Waterston, Ricki Lake, and Matthew Lillard. Opening April 13.

Surviving the Game—A thriller about a lethal form of hide-and-seek in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. With Rutger Hauer, Ice-T, F. Murray Abraham, Gary Busey, and Charles S. Dutton. Directed by Ernest Dickerson. Opening April 15.

Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould—A dramatic biography of the iconoclastic pianist. With Colm Feore. Directed by François Girard. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening April 14.

Two Small Bodies—Suzy Amis is a stripper and Fred Ward is a police detective investigating the disappearance of her two children in this erotic tale of fear and obsession. Written by Neal Bell and Beth B, the director, based on Bell's play. Opening April 15.

White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf—Jack London's big dog is back in this sequel to Disney's 1991 North Country adventure. This time, he's helping an Alaskan Indian tribe fight an evil mining company. Directed by Ken Olin. Opening April 15.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Belle Époque—An aging eccentric painter (Fernando Fernán Gómez) chatters about the chaos of thirties Spain from the vantage of his rural home; a murder and two suicides frame his story. But it's still frivolous art-house kitsch—a roll-in-the-hay comedy that convulses the gelato-and-cappuccino crowd every time a naïve young deserter (Jorge Sanz) succumbs to one of the artist's four attractive daughters (Miriam Díaz-Aroca, Maribel Verdú, Ariadna Gil, and Penélope Cruz). Accepting this year's Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, the director, Fernando Trueba, paid tribute to Billy Wilder. Apart from a drag scene in which Sanz resembles Tony Curtis and dances a tango with Gil the way Jack Lemmon did with Joe E. Brown, this is no "Some Like It Hot." The movie lacks invention and surprise and, in the end, is even morally conventional. In Spanish.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Bitter Moon—Roman Polanski's rivetingly weird new movie tells the story of two married couples who meet on a cruise ship. Nigel (Hugh Grant) and Fiona (Kristin Scott Thomas), a proper pair of Brits, are obviously a little bored with each other; voluptuous Mimi (Emmanuelle Seigner) and her wheelchair-bound husband, Oscar (Peter Coyote), are locked in a destructive relationship in which their mutual passion can be expressed only as cruelty. Polanski can't quite muster the icy absurdist rigor that made his early pictures so distinctive, and the big erotic set pieces play like an "SCTV" parody of "Last Tango in Paris." The couples' sadistic gamesmanship isn't nearly as disturbing—or as funny—as it should be, because the staging keeps turning garish and theatrical, as if Polanski couldn't stop reminding us how naughty he is. His style betrays a kind of creative panic: it's Buñuel with an elbow in your ribs. Also with Victor Banerjee.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/11/94.) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Quad Cinema, and Thalia.)

Four Weddings and a Funeral—Everything that depicts nuptial chaos is funny—particularly Rowan Atkinson's self-contained bit as a novice priest who blows a mental fuse during a marriage service and soldiers on with panicky determination. But the central relationship, between a British commitment-phobe (Hugh Grant) and an all too easy American (the flat, inexplicable Andie MacDowell), makes for few sparks and less sense. The setup is too arch to support the movie's detour into poignance, though John Hannah does give a moving reading of W. H. Auden's "Funeral Blues." Grant's goofy charm holds the comedy aloft—he rises like a fuzzy balloon—even if what he does is just a heartthrob version of Tom Conti's woolly comic style. Mike Newell directed Richard Curtis's script; co-starring Simon Callow, Kristin Scott Thomas, and James Fleet.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

Germinal—Claude Berri's latest epic, adapted from Zola, is set in nineteenth-century France, a lot of it underground. There, such miners as Maheu (Gérard Depardieu), the creepy Chaval (Jean-Roger Milo), and the troubled newcomer, Étienne (Renaud), ply their spine-cracking trade and work up steam against the venal demands of the company. Depardieu is all lusty brawn and strident yearnings, but Maheu is too dull and decent a role for the actor's loutish sense of fun. The movie itself is a largely fun-free zone. Just occasionally, everything clicks: when a stolid, silent old miner strangles the life out of a rich young girl, you feel the rage of a whole society sharpened to a terrible point. In French.—A.L. (3/14/94) (Paris.)

The House of the Spirits—Adapted from the novel by Isabel Allende, and directed by Bille August, this is really quite an achievement. It brings together Jeremy Irons, Meryl Streep, Winona Ryder, Antonio Banderas, and Vanessa Redgrave and insures that, without exception, they all give their worst performances ever. It all starts in Latin America in the nineteen-twenties, with Irons as Esteban Trueba, a devilish patriarch with a wife (Streep) who is clairvoyant, though strangely unable to see how terrible this movie is going to be. Then there's his creepy sister, played by Glenn Close—the only performer to emerge with a scrap of dignity. One generation down, his errant daughter (Ryder) is torn between thoughtful voice-

Rebellions, Perversities, and Main Events

Murray Kempton

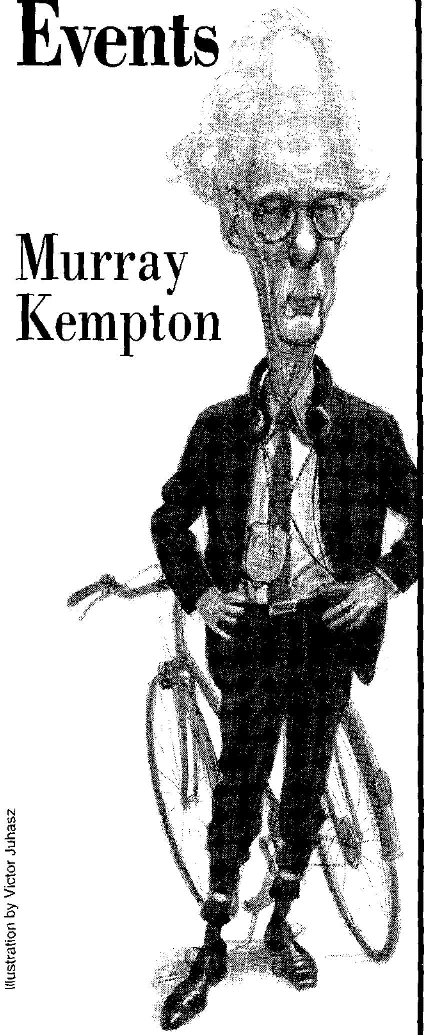


Illustration by Victor Juhasz

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TIMES BOOKS

overs ("Our memory is fragile") and soupy talk with Antonio Banderas: "I love you and you love me, and that's what matters. . . . I hear you've started to make political speeches." And so on, for decades. It's hard to name the low point of this stinker, but in the end it has to be Irons' accent. If you thought Clint Eastwood doing John Huston in "White Hunter, Black Heart" sounded silly, get a load of Jeremy Irons: he sounds like John Huston doing Clint Eastwood doing James Stewart doing Anthony Quinn. A baffling blend of the earnest and the sloppy, "House of the Spirits" turns into the funniest Hollywood movie of the nineties without ever being any fun.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Hudsucker Proxy—It's 1958, and Norville Barnes (Tim Robbins) is a schmuck from out of town, come to make his fortune in New York. Meanwhile, Hudsucker Industries, headed by the scheming Sidney J. Mussberger (Paul Newman), is looking for a total idiot to stand in as president for a while. Slap the two together, throw in a motormouth journalist (Jennifer Jason Leigh), and you've made yourself a new kind of comedy: retro-screwball. Shouldn't moviemakers be investigating the modern implications of screwball, instead of retreading old ground? Still, Joel and Ethan Coen (who wrote the screenplay with Sam Raimi) know every inch of that ground, and the resulting act of homage provides their most likable film since "Raising Arizona." Joel Coen directed.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Tower East; through April 14.)

Jimmy Hollywood—Barry Levinson wrote and directed this dark, nervous comedy about fame and misfortune. Against all the odds, it's his most searching, most carefree project in years, a return to the robustness of "Diner" and "Tin Men." Joe Pesci does his jumpy, unstoppable number as Jimmy Alto, a would-be actor stuck on the wrong side of Hollywood with nothing but his hopes. He used to be an aluminum-siding salesman, one of Levinson's Tin Men, so you know that he'll never give up. Jimmy and the dopey William (Christian Slater), a sidekick without much kick, truss up a local thief, dump him in front of the police station, and thereby, without really trying, launch a new vigilante group on the streets of L.A. Jimmy's girlfriend (Victoria Abril) is horrified, but this mad and pathetic tough-guy act is his ticket to stardom—it works. Levinson doesn't just follow this break for freedom; he leads the way, letting his camera run ahead of the script and tell its own tale of promise and disappointment. It takes a bright-eyed director, for instance, to make a chase sequence look fresh, but somehow, with a zippy tracking shot and frantic closeups of pounding feet, Levinson does it. The movie goes on too long, and the ending is milked too heavily for irony, but it makes you sit up and watch—it's serious fun.—A.L. (4/4/94) (34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Guild. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII, and 84th Street Sixplex; through April 14.)

Major League II—The director, David S. Ward, and the screenwriter, R. J. Stewart, don't deliver on a sound idea—to show what happens to underdogs like the fictionalized Cleveland Indians of Ward's 1989 baseball comedy, "Major League," when they turn into top dogs (and hot dogs). Instead of building solid farce machinery, the filmmakers pile on gimmicks and otherwise waste energy on the romantic existential woes of newly civilized pitcher Rick (Wild Thing) Vaughn (Charlie Sheen). The plucky, underutilized cast includes regulars Tom Berenger, Corbin Bernsen, Dennis Haysbert, James Gammon, Margaret Whitton, and Bob Uecker; Randy Quaid, as a rabid fan; Eric Bruskotter, as a rookie catcher; and David Keith, as an evil veteran catcher. Omar Epps, who substitutes for Wesley Snipes, manages to fill Snipes's baseball shoes.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Naked Gun 33⅓: The Final Insult—The third installment in the "Naked Gun" series stars Leslie Nielsen as Frank Drebin, but then nobody else could star as Frank Drebin. Nielsen has taken the art of deadpan into uncharted territory, marrying a polite, paternal manner to a state of acute mental shutdown. The new movie, directed by Peter Segal, doesn't always get it right, but there is plenty of random chaos, leading to a nuclear-envelope scene at the Academy Awards, and the parodies keep on springing out of nowhere. Some work better than others; the seventies scene, complete with giant Afro, is a joy, whereas the "Thelma & Louise" rip-off goes nowhere and fizzles out.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

The Paper—Ron Howard's big-city-newspaper comedy is a game try at reviving a great Hollywood genre. The movie—which follows Henry Hackett (Michael Keaton), the Metro editor of a struggling New York tabloid, through a single, absurdly gruelling day—gets most of its laughs by constantly piling fresh difficulties on top of already impossible circumstances. Keaton is at his best here, which means that his mind appears to be working at warp speed, and with a berserk, reckless lucidity. Randy Quaid, Marisa Tomei, Robert Duvall, and Jason Alexander create lively, funny characters for Keaton to bounce off, and Howard lets the actors' energy drive the movie. Unfortunately, some inappropriate yuppie philosophizing starts creeping in toward the end; it's clear that Howard and the screenwriters, David and Stephen Koepp, aren't quite willing to go all the way with the heartless, cynical wit of the genre.—T.R. (3/28/94) (Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 19th Street East 6; through April 14.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

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Reality Bites—Ben Stiller's film is a romantic comedy about what has come to be called Generation X. The characters are just out of college, and they're not thrilled about their prospects: they're overeducated and underemployed, and no one seems to know, or care, what they're going through. The picture has its charms: Stiller's direction gives it an appropriately loose, drifting rhythm; Winona Ryder, in the central role, has a fresh, natural style that makes even the most contrived dialogue sound authentic. But the story is essentially a thin and conventional romantic triangle, straight out of thirties Hollywood; the filmmakers try to disguise the fluffiness by unleashing a torrent of trash-culture allusions and sociological truisms.—T.R. (3/7/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e., nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

A Tale of Winter—The second film in Eric Rohmer's current cycle, "Tales of the Four Seasons" (the first, "A Tale of Springtime," was released here in 1992), is, as usual, a slow, closely observed story of romantic indecisiveness. The heroine, Félicie (Charlotte Véry), is an irritating woman, of the sort that Rohmer often treats with great tenderness: she keeps two ardent suitors at arm's length while she clings to the faint possibility of a reunion with a long-lost love. She's so stubbornly idealistic that she can't accept the imperfect joys available to her. It's Rohmer's pleasure to reward her for her fanaticism and her irrational patience. His aesthetic philosophy is to stake out, and hold, a position from which he can ambush the rare life-altering event, the moment of grace, the miracle. He captures one of those at the end of this picture, and you smile at its aptness and its beauty. Also with Hervé Furic, Michel Voletti, and Frédéric Van Den Driessche. In French.—T.R. (4/11/94) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould—With Colm Feore, directed by François Girard. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting April 14.)

The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl—This German documentary is a profoundly unsettling three hours at the movies. Riefenstahl, now ninety-one years old, made two brilliant documentaries—"Triumph of the Will" (1935) and "Olympia" (1938)—under the aegis of the Nazi Party. She was known as "Hitler's favorite filmmaker," but has always insisted that her movies were never meant to advance a political program—that she looked at contemporary events with the pure, disinterested eye of an artist. Subjected to on-camera interrogation by this film's director, Ray Müller, she sticks to that story. If you believe her, she's one kind of monster; if you don't, she's another. The juxtaposition of her grotesque apologia with clips from her grandiose, strikingly composed films makes for a bizarre and sobering spectacle. In German.—T.R. (3/28/94) (Film Forum.)

DAVE McKEAN

Opening April 15, Iain Softley's "Backbeat."

DAVE MCKEAN

REVIVALS

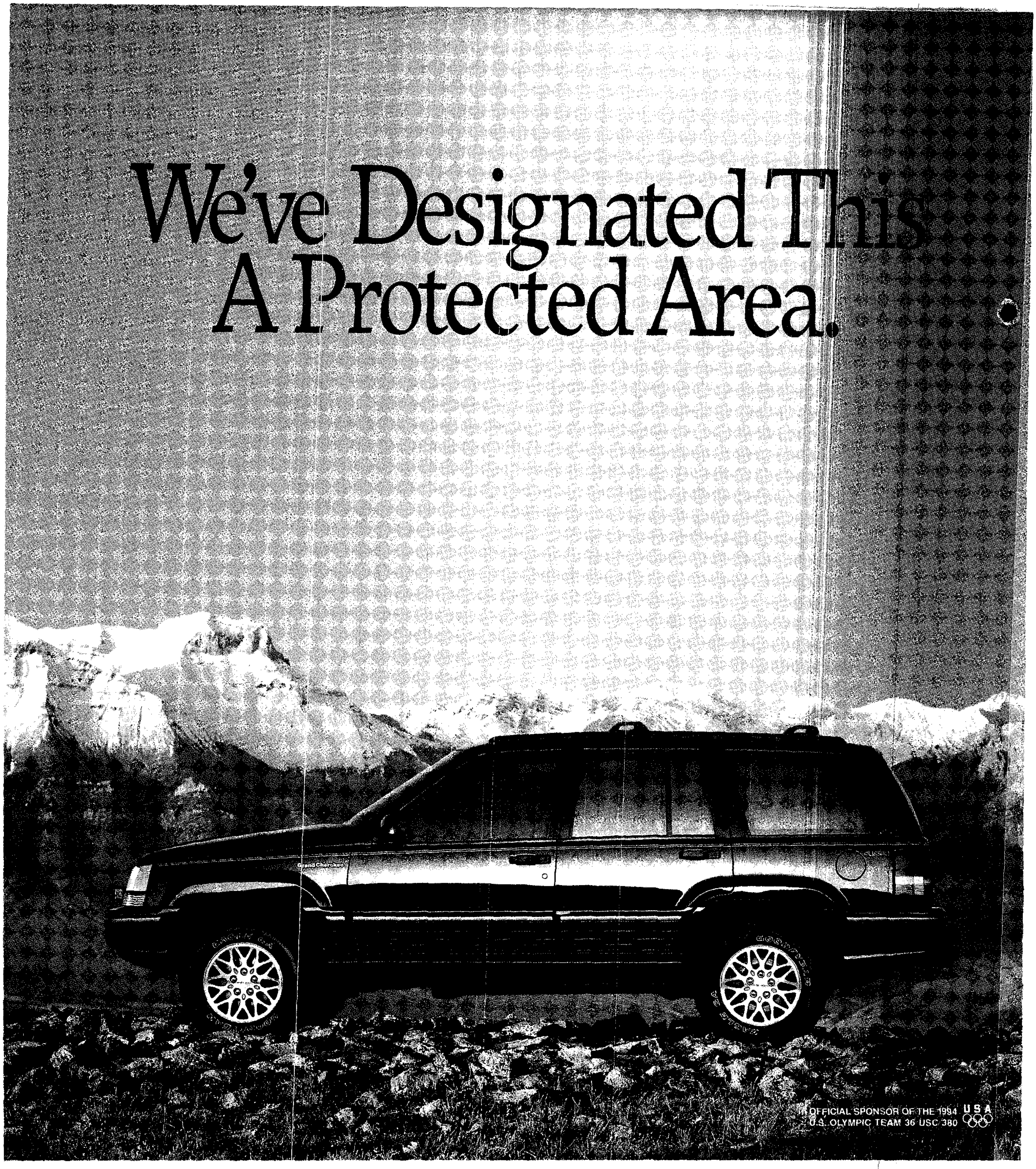
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael.)

The Puritan (1939)—Jean-Louis Barrault was not yet an internationally known actor, and those of us who saw this unheralded young man in "The Puritan" experienced a sense of discovery. His bony, thin young face was perfect for Liam O'Flaherty's psychological study of the murderer Ferriter, a righteous reformer and sexually obsessed religious fanatic. Barrault's acting was so unusually objective that one respected this poor devil even at his most hopelessly self-deceived. The film, condemned by New York's State Board of Censors in toto as "indecent, immoral, sacrilegious, tending to incite to crime and corrupt morals," is in perfectly good taste, but the censors had a reason for their stand: Ferriter is not only conceived as a censor type, he's actually engaged in this work in the film. The production, which also features Pierre Fresnay and Viviane Romance, was made in Paris by the director, Jeff Musso, for a total cost of $27,000. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; April 13.)

Sabotage (1936; "The Woman Alone")—Hitchcock thought that he erred in this one, and that that explained why the picture wasn't a hit. But he was wrong: this adaptation of Conrad's "The Secret Agent" may be just about the best of his English thrillers, and if the public didn't respond it wasn't his fault. Sylvia Sidney and Oscar Homolka are a married pair, the Verlocs, who manage a small movie house; Desmond Tester plays Mrs. Verloc's younger brother, who unknowingly carries a bomb in the package her husband has given him to deliver. There's a breathtaking sequence when Mrs. Verloc, who has just learned of her brother's death, watches the cartoon "Who Killed Cock Robin?" With John Loder, Sara Allgoo, Martita Hunt, Peter Bull, and Torin Thatcher.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 14.)

The Scarlet Letter (1926)—"I wanted to make a film of 'The Scarlet Letter.' . . . I was asked which director I would like, and I chose Victor Sjöström, who had arrived at M-G-M some years earlier from Sweden. I felt that the Swedes were closer to the feelings of New England Puritans than modern Americans." With historic simplicity, Lillian Gish described the background of this film. She leaves it for us to explain her extraordinary taste and judgment—and her acting genius. Her Hester Prynne is one of the most beautifully sustained performances in screen history—mercurial, delicate, passionate. Sjöström chose the Swedish actor Lars Hanson for Arthur Dimmesdale; Henry B. Walthall plays Prynne. Karl Dane is also in the cast. The cinematography is by Hendrik Sartov, who had earlier worked with Griffith; the adaptation—or diminution—of Hawthorne is by Frances Marion. Sjöström presents a heroine struggling against moralistic conventions; his conception is so strong that the coy elements in the scenario and the cloying titles almost disappear from consciousness. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; April 18-19.)

Topaze (1933)—John Barrymore is completely charming as the shabby, unworldly science teacher who is bounced from his academic environment and lands in the business world of delightful depravity; handed his first Martini, he gulps the olive with the liquid. The film was made in the period when teachers were considered virtuous recluses and the academic world was called the ivory tower. At the time—which really wasn't so long ago—the attitudes in this gentle comedy were thought very modern and sly and cynical. Produced by David O. Selznick, it's an elegantly designed picture; it was directed by Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast in his too leisurely, "Continental" style—everything is a little too slow. With Myrna Loy as the sophisticated woman who is attracted by the teacher's innocence. Adapted from Marcel Pagnol's play by Benn W. Levy and (though uncredited) Ben Hecht.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 16.)



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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE CORRECTION, OR WHATEVER IT IS, WILL BE TELEVISED

It was the consensus last Tuesday morning in the studios of CNBC, the cable-TV network that provides business and financial news all day long, that the recent drop in the price of stocks—the Dow Jones Industrial Average had fallen 7.1 per cent during the seven previous trading days—did not warrant use of the word "crash." Among the words that were being used by anchors and correspondents waiting to go on the air were "stumble," "slide," "disruption," and—most frequently—"correction." Ron Insana, one of the anchors of CNBC's "The Money Wheel," which airs for four hours each morning and three and a half hours each afternoon, held the belief that words like "correction" and "disruption" simply meant that the "stumble" was, as he put it, "no ordinary boating accident."

Whatever it was, it was making a lot of people nervous, and a lot of these nervous people were turning to CNBC to watch what was happening to their money. This didn't seem to be making the people at CNBC's studios, which are over in Fort Lee, particularly nervous, although steps were being taken to insure that the person whose stake in the market is small or indirect (i.e., through a company retirement fund) be kept informed—and kept from panicking. For instance, the network's managing editor and vice-president for business news, Peter Sturtevant, had seen to it that a live remote was set up inside a Fidelity Investments office in lower Manhattan, in order to monitor the comings and goings of those who in recent years had moved their savings from safe, sleepy money-market accounts to stock mutual funds—and now might just be, well, panicking.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD

Some in the studio that morning, including Roger Ailes, the president of CNBC, seemed concerned that they not appear pleased about all the "volatility," another word being used. Mr. Ailes, who during the crash of 1987 was in Washington, working as a campaign adviser to Republicans, did acknowledge that volatility was good for business. (By the network's own estimates, perhaps twenty-five per cent more viewers have been tuning in to CNBC since the stock markets began to tumble in mid-March.) Mr. Ailes then opened a copy of the *Wall Street Journal* to a page that carried nothing but an advertisement for CNBC; the ad read, "The Dow plummets in heavy trading. But first, today's weather. CNN tells you if your shirt will get wet. CNBC tells you if you've still got one." He was really pleased with that.

There is a 9 A.M. editorial meeting at CNBC every weekday, attended by more than a dozen people and presided over by Mr. Sturtevant, who's tall and serious and wore his initials embroidered on the left pocket of his shirt. The discussion he led that morning was mostly about complicated financial instruments called derivatives. Derivatives, almost everyone agreed, might be a key reason that the markets were stumbling, etc., but no one was sure if and how they could be explained to TV viewers, especially those whom CNBC did not want to panic.

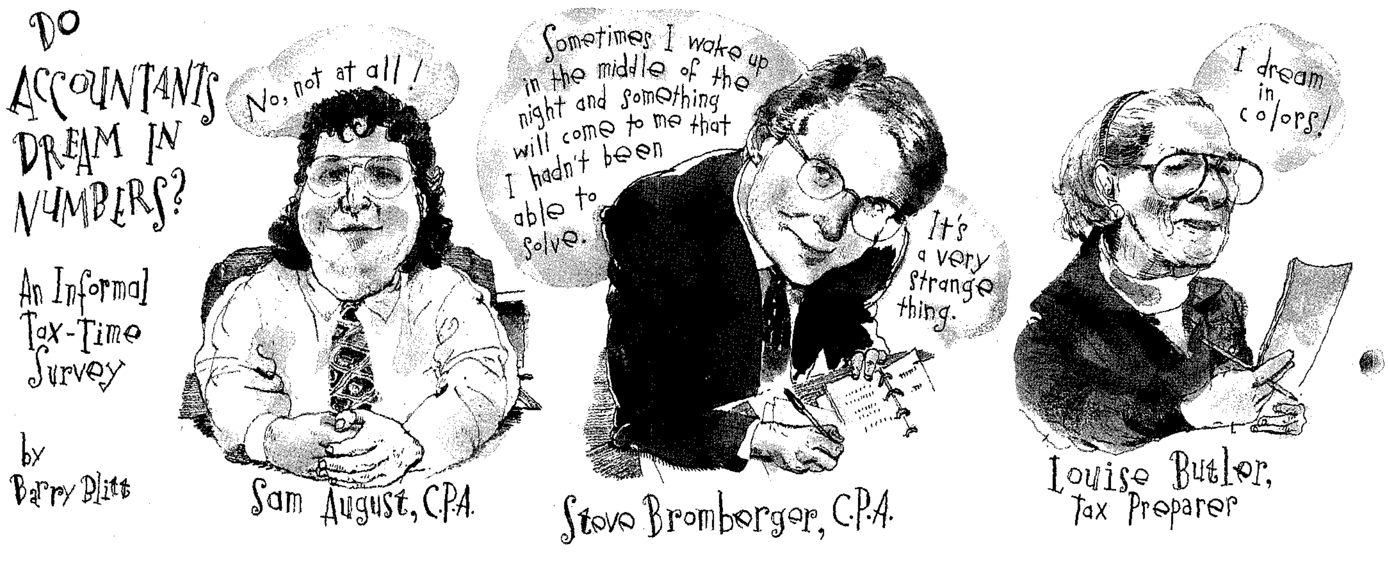
"If derivatives are what's causing all the turmoil, we should do something about them," Mr. Sturtevant said at one point.

"O.K.," one of the producers said. "We'll get the graphics department to show off their new animation equipment."

"Yeah," somebody else said, "with derivatives running across the bottom of the screen."

Mr. Sturtevant decided that there would be a segment about derivatives. (Later, there was talk around the studio that a special class might be set up to teach the network's financial correspondents more about derivatives.)

The discussion turned to the news that General Mills was dropping the prices of some of its cereals—a decision wholly unrelated, it would seem, to the volatility of stocks. The company's C.E.O. was


Do Accountants Dream in Numbers?
An Informal Tax-Time Survey
by Barry Blitt
No, not at all!
Sam August, C.P.A.
Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and something will come to me that I hadn't been able to solve.
It's a very strange thing.
Steve Bromberger, C.P.A.
I dream in colors!
Louise Butler, Tax Preparer

going to appear in the studio later to discuss the move live.

"So cereal prices fluctuate—who cares?" somebody said.

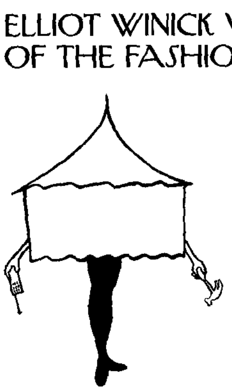
"Cereal is an area that everybody can relate to," Mr. Sturtevant explained, and, after a little more backing and forthing, it was agreed that cereal prices rated airtime.

The task of explaining to viewers that morning why derivatives were important fell to Mr. Insana. As is true of most of the on-air talent at CNBC, Mr. Insana does not look like a television personality. He is on the short side, his hair is on the receding side, and he wears glasses. Also, unlike most TV anchors, he knows a lot about bonds, which derivatives have something to do with. In his attempt to give derivatives their due, he discussed them on "The Money Wheel" with the president of a capital-management company, an economist, a bank director, and a bank vice-president. Later, after the segment was done, Mr. Insana said he believed that the discussion of derivatives was "definitely going to appeal to our core audience" but that to reach others would have required more "verbal airtime."

By noon, the verbal airtime was mostly taken up with good news: the markets were rebounding. News around the studio was exciting, too: Leon Panetta, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, had agreed to a live interview. Over the previous couple of weeks, a number of other members of the Clinton Administration, including Laura Tyson, Ron Brown, and Robert Reich, had made themselves available to the network, as the White House sought to calm fears about the economy. This newfound eagerness to include CNBC in the Administration's media plans has naturally pleased the people at the network in a big way.

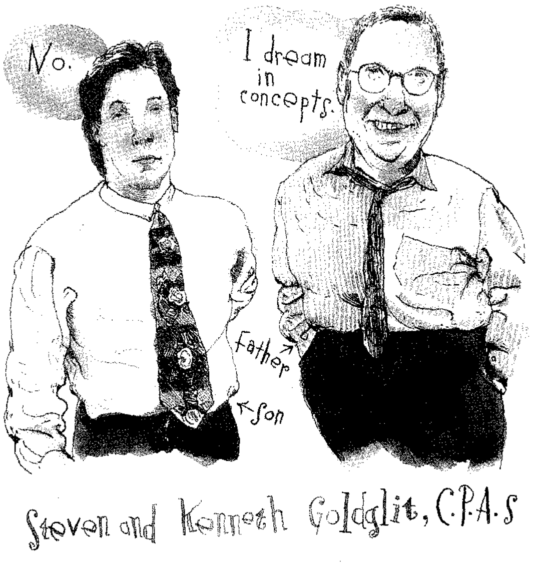
The Dow finished the day up more than eighty points. Even if you had been watching "The Money Wheel" that afternoon with the sound off—something that some people actually do, because all they're watching is the stock prices that run and run across the bottom of the screen—you would have known the news was good, because the anchors kept smiling. Early in the evening, as CNBC's business coverage began to wind down (the nighttime lineup is devoted mostly to non-business talk shows), some in the studio whose job it is to cover Wall Street seemed surprised by the Dow's rebound, but not Mr. Insana. "It finished up because everybody said it would finish down," he said.

ELLIOT WINICK WAS AHEAD OF THE FASHIONS

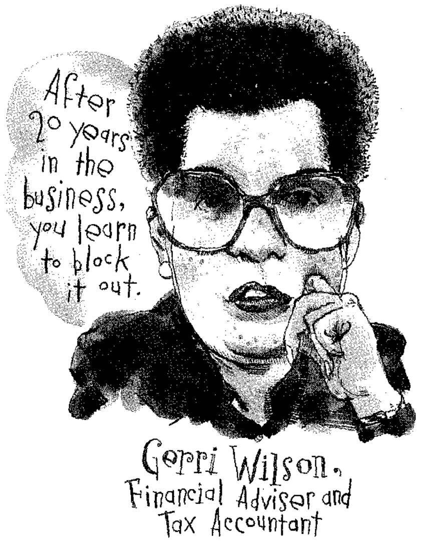


Elliot Winick was evincing a strange serenity late one afternoon last week, perhaps because of the power he possesses as the only person alive who can officially call a halt to Seventh on Sixth's market week—the designers' extravaganza that was to begin the following day in Bryant Park, behind the Forty-second Street Library. Mr. Winick is the site manager for fifty-nine shows of women's fall fashions by sixty-one notable designers, and he is concerned not with tartans, homeboy chic, or hemlines but with matters like parking permits and how to erect vast white tents in the park without penetrating the library's subterranean storage vault. (The solution: Anchor the tent poles in blocks of concrete aboveground.) "I'm one of the few people in the city who saw every show during market week last year, and I'm one of the few of *those* few who couldn't care less," Mr. Winick, who is forty-three years old and was wearing jeans and a purple-and-blue checked sports shirt, declared. "Sure, I enjoy the energy. Oscar de la Renta is very different from, for example, Anna Sui. Yes, the shows definitely have different chemistries, but I don't know what they are."

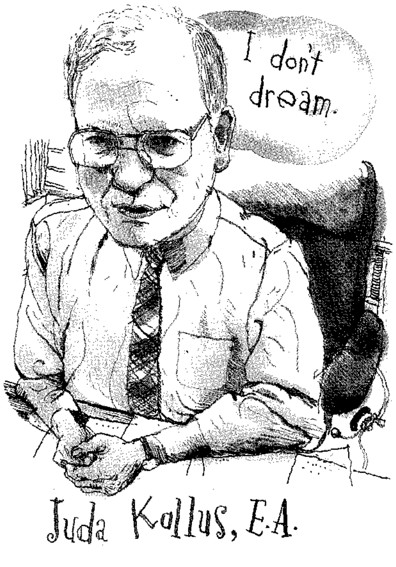
Mr. Winick was in Bryant Park that afternoon, of course, standing in what he referred to as the Gertrude tent—one of two tents that were to house runways and a lot of people with a thing for clothes. The tent, he said, got its nickname because it was set up around the park's statue of Gertrude Stein. The statue would be spending market week backstage, and someone had wrapped a grungy red-and-black hunting shirt around her shoulders. Mr. Winick did not appear concerned. "What I'm watching out for is a crazy person jumping on the runway, and for overcrowding—as when a designer invites everyone he knows plus half of F.I.T.," he



Steven and Kenneth Goldglit, C.P.A.s


After 20 years in the business, you learn to block it out.

Gerri Wilson, Financial Adviser and Tax Accountant


I don't dream.

Juda Kallus, E.A.

said, referring to the Fashion Institute of Technology. "I look for people with the wrong credentials or passes. And I watch the models. I have to watch in case one of them trips."

Mr. Winick then said that Donna Karan was scheduled to rehearse one of her shows in the Gertrude tent in five hours. His boss, Fern Mallis, had been hovering anxiously. She is the executive director of Seventh on Sixth, the organization that came up with the idea of market week in Bryant Park. She now said, "The perception is that the Gertrude tent is not finished." It was a reasonable perception: thirty workmen or more were busy putting up walls, fastening lights, and moving big things around. Mr. Winick remained composed.

A little later, as the workmen bustled about, he calmly explained that the logistics of market week require the use of eighty-five walkie-talkies, two hundred and sixty workmen a day for two weeks (including setup and strike), and a hundred and fifty people on-site around the clock. He is experienced in the business of orchestrating special events. Two years ago, he produced the bicentennial celebration for the New York Stock Exchange, and he is the founder of the Five-Borough Bike Tour. The behavior of the fashion crowd, he said, doesn't necessarily compare impressively with that of other mobs he's encountered. "Even though this crowd is fairly élite, it's capable of storming the barricades," he said. "We prevent that by keeping people moving, so they think they're going somewhere they want to go."

Speaking of going, Mr. Winick said, it was time for him to head to the command center—a trailer, parked nearby on West Fortieth Street. Word had come that it was full of photographers shouting about how they *did* arrange for press passes and *what do you mean* there aren't any. As he walked toward the command center, there was time to ask him if he was planning to wear a suit the next day.

Yes, he was.

By whom?

"Well, I got it at Macy's, I think," he replied. "Wait. Did I? It could be Bill Blass. I have no idea."

ACCOMPANY MAN

Steve Sterner's fingers, like the rest of Steve Sterner, are forty-two years old, pale, and slender—unremarkable, really, until they begin to play the piano, which they'll be doing plenty of during the next four weeks at the Film Forum, in SoHo. The Film Forum is having a festival of M-G-M's movies of the silent era, and Mr. Sterner is the theatre's chief silent-film accompanist. For that matter, Mr. Sterner is probably the most sought after (if not quite the only) such accompanist in the city, and the reason is apparent once you've heard him play. His fingers are like wands, spiriting you back to the precise year a movie was made. Bruce Goldstein, the classical-movies programmer at the Film Forum, told us recently that he tries to work at least one or two silent movies into every schedule he draws up, but that if Mr. Sterner is busy elsewhere he usually just sticks to the talkies. "He's so good that people come whistling out of the theatre," Mr. Goldstein said. "When was the last time that happened to you after a Broadway musical?"

One afternoon a couple of weeks ago, we met Mr. Sterner at Steve McGraw's, an Upper West Side piano bar, restaurant, and cabaret where Mr. Sterner hangs out. We recognized him straightaway, because a long face, an eloquent nose, and a dapper mustache gave him the look of a character actor from the twenties. With the permission of the owner, he led us to the piano and struck a few chords, and then he began telling us a little about his life in the silent era, which began while he was a senior at Bronx High School of Science. He'd learned to play the piano as a child, and, like everybody else, he'd seen clips of silent movies on TV, but he never had a twenties-something movie-house experience—flickering screen, live music—until a fall evening in 1967, when, with a few friends from a Bronx Science drama class, he saw "The General," starring Buster Keaton, at the Museum of Modern Art. "The lights dimmed, the screen lit up, the pianist started to play, and it was magic time," Mr. Sterner recalled.

He went on to attend City College, where he studied music, and, after leaving school, pursued a career as an actor, mostly in musical theatre, and not without some success. (He has appeared on Broadway in "Oh, Brother!" and "Yiddle with a Fiddle.") He was doing some composing, too, when, one day about fifteen years ago, a friend of his who worked at the Thalia told him of the theatre's plans to screen "Flesh and the Devil," starring Greta Garbo and John Gilbert in a steamy romance, and asked him to score and accompany it. Mr. Sterner accepted the offer nervously, having never accompanied a film. He was also nervous, he told us, because he'd never seen "Flesh and the Devil," but he did a bit of research and found that its plot involved a Spanish countess in a love triangle with two men who were friends. "So I wrote a Spanish-seductress theme—very 'Besame Mucho,' " he said. Then, upon seeing the film for the first time, only a few hours before he was to accompany it, he got really nervous: the film contained no references to Spain. He rushed home and made up a whole new theme—and he played it for us now, undulating his shoulders sensuously. It sounded lush and passionate and not at all Spanish.

Punctuating his conversation with an occasional flourish, Mr. Sterner went on to explain that in preparing for a screening he typically watches a movie once, taking notes on it scene by scene. Then he writes three or four principal themes, composing from scratch, except for when, as with "Carmen," say, there is already illustrious music associated with the story; in that case, he chooses to riff on the well-known motifs. At all screenings, he improvises variations on his themes. "In performance, my eyes are on the film ninety-five per cent of the time," he said.

Mr. Sterner had brought to Steve McGraw's a shopping bag full of lined paper—his notes for a hundred and eighty silent films—and he offered to give us a preview of his music for several of the silent M-G-M classics that are to be shown at the Film Forum. He played one of his themes for Erich von Stroheim's dark masterpiece "Greed"—it sounded something like Kurt Weill—and then a number of his passages for "The Scarlet Letter." There was a pastoral motif for Hester Prynne, a mysterious-sounding one for Chillingworth, and, for the letter "A," a startling phrase that Mr. Sterner described aptly as "a skin-searing sort of thing." In all, Mr. Sterner said, he would perform at fifty-eight screenings of the M-G-M films. That sounded to us like a lot of piano playing until he remarked that at the Film Forum's Harold Lloyd festival last year he'd performed ninety times in five weeks, which included one day when he did six movies, playing from 2 P.M. until midnight. "My fingers don't get sore," he told us. "But it would be nice to have somebody massaging my back while I play."

He played a while longer, and at times seemed lost in the music. "I was born too late," he told us at one point. "My favorite composers are George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, and Irving Berlin." He added that if there is such a thing as reincarnation he's certain he was once a dog on a movie-studio lot in the twenties.

BECK IS BECK (AND EVEL IS STILL COOL)

"I'M a loser, baby, so why don't you kill me?" That's a line from the song "Loser," by Beck. Beck is twenty-three, is from Los Angeles (most recently), has a last name (Hansen) that he doesn't use, and has an album ("Mellow Gold") that, after being out only a month or so, is about as big as a record can be while remaining marginal enough to be, you know, alternative. Don't ask us why, but from the moment we first heard that line from "Loser" we haven't been able to get it out of our head, and apparently a lot of other people are right where we are, because it's a hit single—and *this* development, we'd heard, had recently led Beck to develop a very complicated relationship to the song: self-conscious about all the non-loser-ish attention "Loser" was bringing him, he'd started leaving it out of his live performances. Those performances, by the way, continue to take place only in small clubs and coffeehouses, and even in these venues Beck has sometimes refused to be the main act on the bill.

Concerned about Beck—and, O.K., hoping it wasn't true about his not doing "Loser" live anymore—we dropped by the Grand, on East Thirteenth Street, to see him the other night. And he played "Loser"! He just smiled and plunged right into it. But, to show he was still working through some stuff, he gave the audience the finger with both hands as he started to sing. Most of the rest of what he did seemed an uncomplicated and thoroughly successful effort to satisfy the capacity crowd's longing for his funny, folk/punk/country/hip-hop music. He used his whole body—he's a small guy, with shoulders only a little more than a foot apart—to smash an old acoustic guitar before singing a song called "Pay No Mind (Snoozer)." While playing another song, "Soul Suckin Jerk," he pulled out a squirt gun and shot at people dancing and being body-passed in the mosh pit. And several times during his set he poured water over his head, then shook himself off like a dog and adjusted his chin-length hair so that it covered most of his face—something our mom would have disapproved of, which made it exactly right.

Beck being Beck, his act was the opener. The headliner was Evel Knievel (who uses his real last name but has a made-up first one). He doesn't do the motorcycle-jumping thing anymore; at fifty-five, he's given up daredevilry for golf and the occasional loose, question-and-answer appearance like this one at the Grand. There was a screening of a video featuring some of his more spectacular crashes, including famous ones from the seventies—much to the delight of the audience, most of whose members, along with Beck, were of the generation that everybody is talking about, the one that grew up in the seventies and is supposed to think failure is almost as cool as odd new music. After one particularly vicious wipeout, cheers went up, and shadows of raised fists speckled the screen.

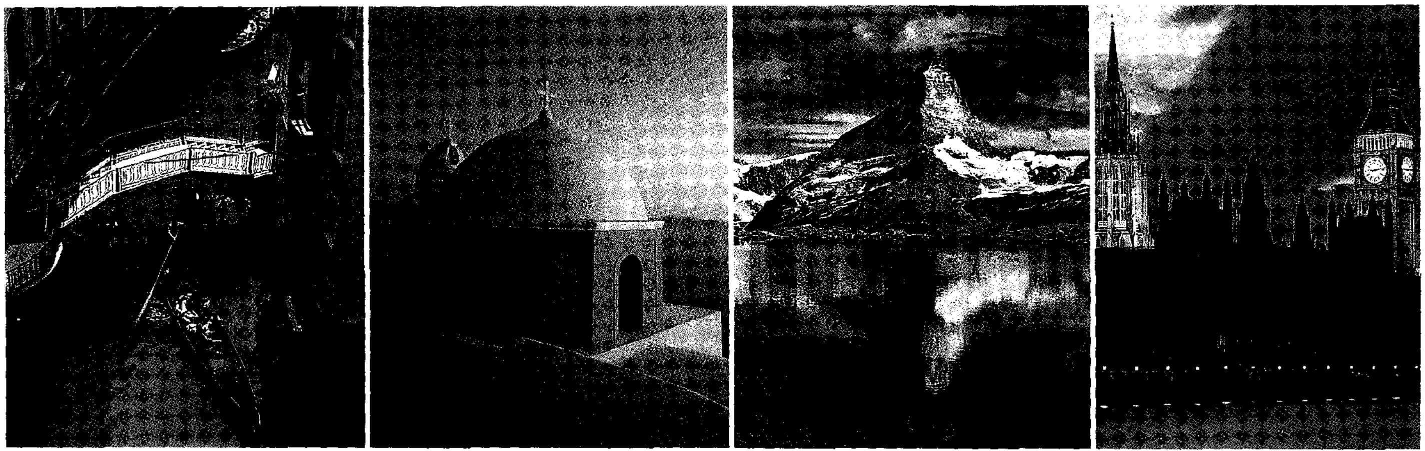
We found ourself wondering whether Evel, more than all those seventies TV shows, might have been the important childhood pop influence on that generation everybody is talking about. Evel himself thought there was a connection, but we're not sure what he thought it was. Addressing the crowd after the video ended, he remarked good-naturedly that "you young people" were the ones "who stole all the Evel Knievel toys from K mart." ♦

Advertisement

A Traveller's
Europe

Perhaps the paramount reason for Europe's attraction for U.S. citizens on holiday is that there is so much of major interest to see and do. Europe's lure in 1994 is even more enhanced by three significant events: the debut of the historic Channel Tunnel, the first land link binding Britain and the Continent; the ceremonies and related displays that will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings on the Normandy coast; and the recent Winter Olympics in Norway, which focuses the attention of the travelling public on Scandinavia for many months more.

Those three events, however, only slightly outshine the kaleidoscope of fascinating happenings and attractions in other parts of Europe in 1994. Since planning—and dreaming—are half the fun of travel, follow along this mini-compendium to assist you in designing a European holiday this year.



Gerald Pile

Hugh Sitton

Joe Cornish

Left to right: In Venice, tourists take a gondola ride along the canals; Greece's Santorini is an island paradise; the imposing Matterhorn in Switzerland; illuminated at night, London's Houses of Parliament and Big Ben command attention.

All photographs ©Tony Stone Images

Austria

The charm and diversions of Vienna are well known: amazing treasures inside the Hofburg Palace, the magnificent Schonbrunn Palace, performances of the renowned Lippizaner stallions, the Vienna Boys Choir, musical events at the State and Folk theatres, strolling the Ringstrasse (one of the world's most splendid boulevards), shopping along the elegant Karntnerstrasse, and a visit to the nearby Vienna Woods.

Sylvain Grandadam

Manfred Mehlig

Tony Craddock

Left to right: Musicians in Vienna play—and dress like—Mozart; houses line Amsterdam's Noordzee Canal; Paris's most-recognized attraction—the Eiffel Tower.

Salzburg is celebrated as the city of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The composer's birthplace can be visited, and Mozart-inspired musical events, highlighted by the famed Mozart Festival, are scheduled throughout the year.

The Benelux Countries

Belgium's capital city, Brussels, is graced by the Grand' Place, perhaps the most majestic medieval plaza on the continent, and the naughty but famed Manneken Pis. The residents of this city look down their noses at any other country that might claim primacy in cuisine, and a visit to one of the fine restaurants here will prove that they indeed have just cause.

In the Netherlands, Amsterdam, often called the "Venice of the North," sprawls across a scenic skein of canals and rivers. Accordingly, a journey by boat is the best way to get the feel of the city. Other principal attractions here include the Rijksmuseum, home of Rembrandt's world-renowned "The Nightwatch"; the home where Rembrandt lived and worked for more than twenty years; another museum devoted to the works of Van Gogh; Anne Frank's house, with its secret apartment; and Kalverstraat, the country's most famous shopping street.

Luxembourg is a lovely, pocket-size nation, with castle-crowned hills and an area of vineyards along the Moselle River Valley.

France

You could easily spend an entire holiday in Paris without exhausting the city's litany of major tourist attractions: the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Basilica of Sacre Coeur, Napolean's tomb; the Louvre, with its controversial I.M. Pei-designed glass pyramid; the Musee d'Orsay; the Beaubourg, with its funky exterior; the vast and impressive palace in suburban Versailles; the Bateaux Mouches for a relaxing ride on the Seine; and familiar but nonetheless breathtaking Notre Dame. The list goes on and on.

June 5 and 6 are the key dates for ceremonies honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy. That's when national leaders and other celebrities will appear—and also when nearby hotel rooms will be solidly booked. But, fortunately, additional ceremonies and displays have been scheduled throughout the year and on into the future.

Other lures for travellers in France include the detailed, colorful tapestries in Bayeux that illustrate the story of William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066; the abbey of Mont St.-Michel; Impressionist painter Claude Monet's home and beloved lily pond at Giverny; and the meticulously restored city of Rouen, where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

The French Riviera features an appealing necklace of cities and towns bordering the Mediterranean—Cannes, Antibes, Nice, Villefranche, St.-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. Back in the hills at St.-Paul-de-Vence is the celebrated indoor-and-outdoor museum, the Maeght Foundation. Two panoramic drives, the Grand and Middle Corniches, connect Nice and Monte Carlo.

Principal wine areas are located near Bordeaux; between Beaune and Dijon, in Burgundy; and in the Rhone and Loire river valleys. The broad, flat Loire plain is also dotted with lavish chateaux—Chambord is the biggest,

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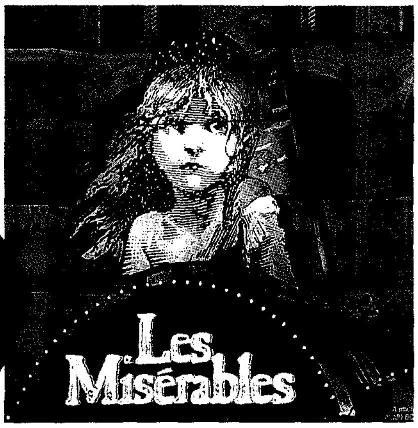

From the waif in Les Mis to Lady Macbeth, theatrical London puts on a show for every taste.

One of London’s more familiar faces is that of Big Ben, still sounding the hours high over the Houses of Parliament.

PORTOBELLO S

Discover bargains in the Portobello Road market. Also jugglers, rockers, and some pretty experienced hagglers.

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Chenonceau the loveliest. Also notable are the many well-preserved Roman ruins that stand in splendor in the Rhone Valley.

Germany

Cruises showcasing those storied castles on the Rhine River have long been available to travellers. Now, with Germany again a united nation, similar cruises have begun on the Elbe River. Further, the Rhine-Mainz Canal has finally been completed, connecting the cities of Cologne and Frankfurt with Vienna, Budapest, and the Black Sea via the Rivers Rhine, Main, and Danube. The first full season for voyages on this canal will occur this year.

John Lamb

Joe Cornish

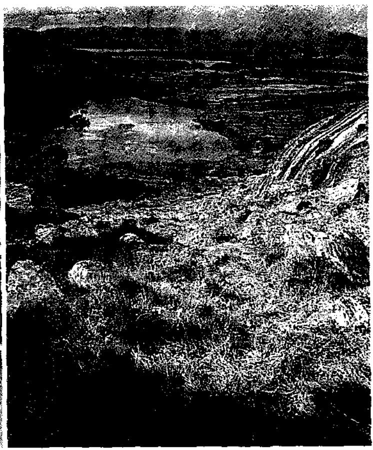
Left to right: **the Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin; a year in Provence may not be enough; Ireland's rugged, hilly landscape; Greece's *Acropolis* is a must-see.**

United Berlin is another tourist mecca, with the fabled Unter den Linden and Frederick the Great's lavish palace, now a museum, easily accessible. The Berlin Wall Memorial provides a peaceful replacement for what used to be a fearsome experience at Checkpoint Charlie.

The so-called Romantic Road, a string of picturesque towns and villages between Wurzburg and Augsburg, is crowned by Rothenburg, arguably the most romantic town in all of Europe, with its half-timbered houses and narrow, cobbled lanes.

Germany's "Culture Corridor" is now eminently reachable. So today's traveller can scour the neighboring towns of Weimar, Erfurt, and Eisenach for the likes of Goethe, Martin Luther, and Johann Sebastian Bach—all of whom lived in this small area.

thundering waterfalls including Dettifoss (Europe's biggest) and Gullfoss with its perpetual rainbow; huge glaciers, active volcanos, regularly performing geysers; dramatic rock formations in the Myvatn Lake area; Surtsey, the offshore island created only thirty-one years ago by volcanic eruption from the bottom of the sea.



Joe Cornish

John Lamb

Greece

The friendliness of the Greek people toward travellers is part of the great attraction of this country. Whether you're climbing the Acropolis, wandering through one of the finest archaeological museums on the planet, joining in the revelry of a typical Athenian taverna, or viewing an impressive sound-and-light performance that uses the Parthenon as its backdrop, it will be obvious that your Greek hosts want you to enjoy your visit.

A day's round trip from Athens will take you to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, where the Oracle will still give you a reading on the future (accuracy not guaranteed). Another day's excursion from Athens will allow you to cross the "big ditch"—the Corinth Canal, which joins the Gulf of Corinth with the Aegean Sea—the canal covers the ruins of ancient Corinth; walk through the ruins of Mycenae, where in legend, Greeks departed to destroy Troy, and site of Agamemnon's tomb; or visit the well-preserved amphitheatre at Epidauros, with its astounding acoustics.

Iceland

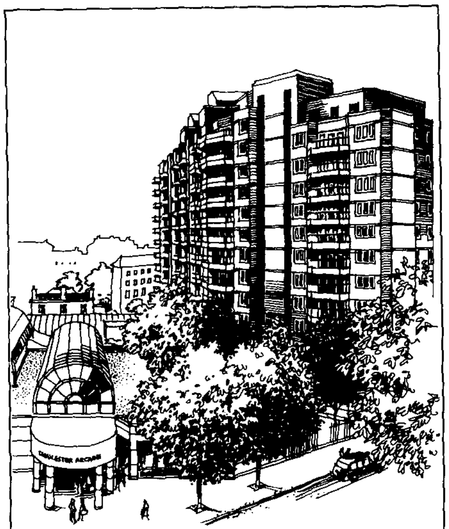
Most of this island-nation's tourist attractions are natural wonders, remote but easily reached from Reykjavik, the capital city:

Akureyri is Iceland's most picturesque town, well worth a visit. Reykjavik itself is not without attractions, including its share of museums and a giant, naturally heated swimming pool used by locals and visitors all year. Nearby at Thingvellir is Althing, site of Europe's first legislature.

Ireland

There's much to recommend to visitors to Ireland, even if they're not seeking their roots in the "ould sod." One of Dublin's world-class sightseeing attractions is the ninth-century Book of Kells, a laboriously scripted Latin text of the four gospels that's colorfully illuminated in remarkable detail; selected pages from the book can be seen in the Trinity College Library.

The Blarney Stone, located in a suburb of Cork, is still there for the kissing, although you almost have to be a contortionist to achieve the feat. Perhaps the prettiest area in the country is centered around Killarney and the Ring of Kerry, in the southwest. In the north, the dramatic, rugged Cliffs of Moher stretch impressively below O'Brien's Tower. Close by, on the south shore of Galway Bay, is Ballyvaughan, a quintessential Irish village where you can spend a rewarding day on a leisurely wander.



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Italy

The first-time visitor's itinerary here is practically preordained: treks to Rome, Florence, and Venice are de rigueur.

Next in traveller interest after the "top three" attractions is the wonderful, winding Amalfi Drive: the scenic, seaside highway against which all others are compared. Precariously hugging rugged cliffs, the Amalfi also allows you to make a stop at the lovely, hilly village of Positano.

The Drive connects Salerno and Sorrento, which are on the Bay of Naples; scheduled ferries depart from both for the storied Isle of Capri. The spectacular ruins of ancient Pompeii (with Mount Vesuvius looming above) are only a short drive from either town.

Italy's Hill Country showcases the medieval towns of Siena and Assisi, and the Lake Country in the far north is doubtless the most scenic area in Italy. A ferry ride on Lake Como and a mini-Amalfi drive north of Stresa, along the western shore of Lake Maggiore, offer dramatic examples of lovely vistas in the region.

Monaco

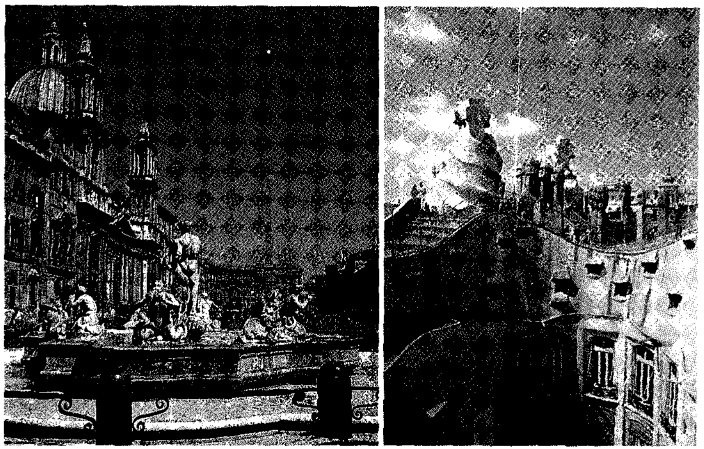
Gambling, of course, is the principal attraction here. The traditional, venerable Casino is a "must" if one wants to literally follow in the footsteps of royalty, nobility, and other celebrities. But there are other places to be visited here as well. Some parts of Prince Rainier's palace are open to visitors, and one of the world's finest oceanographic museums/aquariums (a major interest of the Prince) is another fascinating attraction.

Scandinavia

The recent Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway, helped to focus travellers' attention on all of Scandinavia, since many Olympics visitors extended their trips to Norway's neighboring countries.

Oslo, Norway's capital, snuggles comfortably at the head of Oslofjord. One of Oslo's principal visitor attractions is Frogner Park, where lifelike sculpted figures by Gustav Vigeland are on display. On the country's west coast is the town of Bergen, which was home to the late, great composer Edvard Grieg; his house and grounds are prime attractions here.

Sweden's capital city of Stockholm is built on a network of canals and other waterways, so it, too, has frequently been called the "Venice of the North." A city-orientation tour by boat is highly recommended, as is a day's excursion to and through the thousands of islands of the nearby Stockholm Archipelago. Land-based Stockholm attractions include the Wasa Museum, which houses a centuries-old, recently raised and restored warship; the Skansen Outdoor Museum; sculptor Carl Milles' home and gardens; and the lavish Royal Palace.


Stephen Studd

Left to right: Rome's Piazza Navona is the site of the Neptune Fountain; Antonio Gaudi's architectural experiments are evident throughout Barcelona; Sweden has some of the most beautiful harbor views in all of Europe.

In Denmark, Copenhagen's beloved Tivoli Gardens—an amalgam of rides, theatres, restaurants, a dance pavilion, and landscaped connecting paths, all in the city center—celebrates its hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary in 1994, with suitable ceremonies scheduled throughout the summer. Other sightseeing draws in the city include

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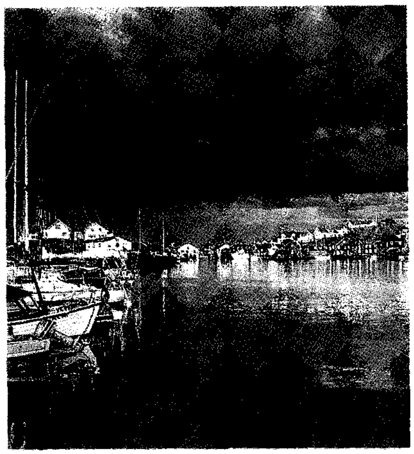
the famous Little Mermaid statue (an acclaimed symbol of the city); various castles and palaces; and the Stroget (pronounced STROY-it), three streets connected as a pedestrians-only shopping mall.

Helsinki, Finland's squeaky clean capital city, showcases the fantastic memorial to native composer Jan Sibelius, the skyline-dominating Cathedral (an imposing church carved from solid rock), and an early-morning harborside market.



Chad Ehlers

Spain

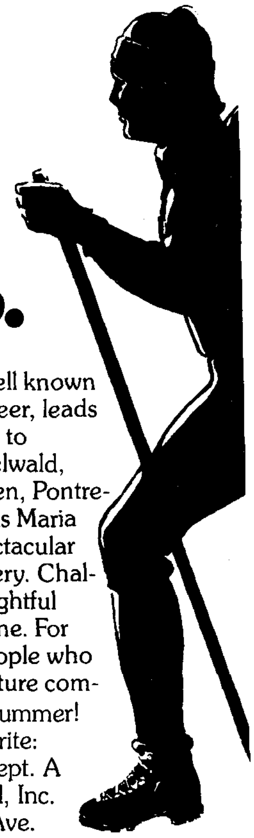
Madrid blossoms with magnificent museums. The Prado, of course, is one of the world's most distinguished. Nearby is the restored and expanded Reina Sofia Art Center, and also in the same area is the eighteenth-century Villahermosa Palace, which has been reconfigured and restored and now displays more than eight hundred pieces from the treasured private collection of Baron Tyssen-Borenmisza.

In Barcelona, on display almost at every turn are astounding Art Nouveau fantasies of the late architect Antonio Gaudi, who apparently believed that angles of any kind are unnecessary in the design of buildings. The boulevard Las Ramblas, tabbed by many as the world's most beautiful, rambles down to the sea.

Switzerland

Zurich has its Bahnhofstrasse, a graceful yet bustling city-center avenue that encourages shopping for Swiss specialties. Geneva's defining symbol is its high-spouting harbor fountain.

Lausanne is a convenient port of embarkation for a half- or full-day boat excursion on Lake Geneva. You'll pass the Castle of Chillon (celebrated in a Lord Byron poem),



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call at a spa in France (be sure to have your passport on hand), and, weather permitting, enjoy clear views of Mont Blanc, Europe's second-highest peak.

Lucerne, on its eponymous lake, is a charming town to stroll around. And here again lovely scenery makes a boat excursion worthwhile. You'll pass the meadow where the legendary William Tell is supposed to have shot an arrow through an apple placed on his son's head.

Matthew Antrobus

Left to right: One of London's most beloved landmarks, the Tower Bridge stands gracefully over the River Thames; Zurich is one of Europe's most attractive cities.

United Kingdom

Number one on Britain's list of 1994 travel attractions is the scheduled May opening of the historic Channel Tunnel, familiarly—and predictably—known as the Chunnel. Passengers have the option of either taking passage in regular passenger-train cars or of staying in their own automobiles, which are then loaded aboard special rail cars. But, with either option, you'll have to wait your turn, since the first several weeks' worth of trips have long since been sold out. This unique rail service will cut the travel time between city-center London and Paris or Brussels to less than four hours.

London's special attractions this year include the reopening of the Tower Bridge Exhibition Area, where autotronics tell the bridge's history. Further, the Tower of London's Medieval Palace has been opened to the public for the first time, with costumed guides bringing the past to life. And, notably, the Tower's Crown Jewel House has been redesigned to accommodate twenty thousand people a day.

This is also the first full season when parts of Buckingham Palace will be open to tourists (the fees from the tours will go toward the restoration of fire-damaged Windsor Castle). But traditional London attractions are sure to draw the crowds that they always have: the Changing of the Guard, Saint Paul's Cathedral, the British Museum, Tate Galleries, Churchill's underground War Rooms, the Houses of Parliament—including Big Ben—Westminster Abbey, Piccadilly Circus, the courts of Old Bailey, Trafalgar Square, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the ferryboat and tour boat excursions on the River Thames.

Remember that any visit to the city of London would be incomplete without your attending at least one stage play among the dozens always on the boards in this world center of theatre productions.

To the west of London, you'll want to travel to Salisbury, with its graceful, piercing cathedral spire; historic and mysterious Stonehenge; the impressive, centuries-old Roman baths at the aptly named city of Bath; and legendary Camelot Country, in Cornwall.

A northward journey might include stops at the charming Cotswold Hills (with such memorable village names as Stow-on-the-Wold and Lower Slaughter on the Water); Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, where the Bard's plays are still performed in a Shakespearean-style theatre; and the peaceful, scenic Lake Country—a world removed from the world's cares.

Howard A. Gardner is a Chicago-based free-lance writer.

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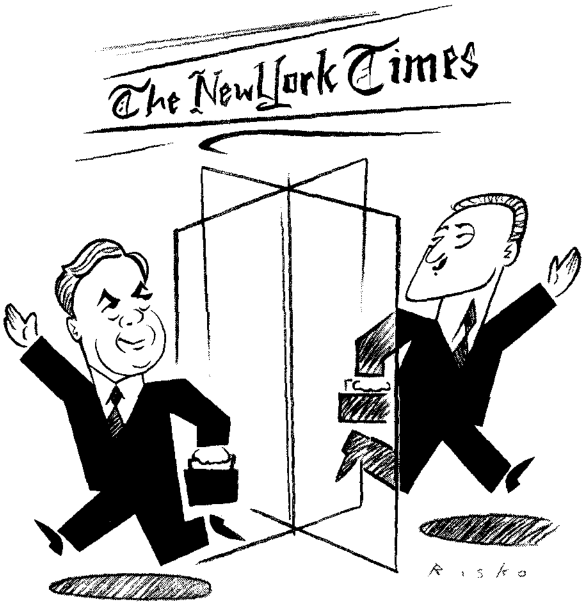
ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

ROOM AT THE TOP

Joseph Lelyveld ascends to the Times' editorship. It was the naming of the new No. 2—and what it said about the future—that kept everyone guessing.

BY KEN AULETTA

WHEN the Politburo wanted to signal a change in the leadership of the Soviet Union, reporters knew because the Soviet state radio suddenly switched from its regular programming to sombre classical music. When the College of Cardinals chooses a new Pope, reporters know because the Vatican releases puffs of white smoke. When the *Times* is about to shift editors, reporters know because a memo printed on stark white paper is posted on the third-floor bulletin board. Such a memo was posted Thursday afternoon. The memo was scheduled to be released this week, but the *Times* speeded up the announcement after learning that a reporter was pursuing the story. Signed by the *Times*' publisher, Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr., it announced that the paper's executive editor, Max Frankel, who turned sixty-four on April 3rd, will step aside on July 1st. The memo named the current managing editor, Joseph Lelyveld, who is fifty-seven, as Frankel's successor, and it named as Lelyveld's replacement Eugene L. Roberts, Jr., a former national editor at the *Times*, who is sixty-one and who left in 1972 to become the executive editor of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*—a job he gave up in 1990.



ROBERT RISKO

The decision was provoked by Frankel, who told Sulzberger in March of 1993 that he wanted to accelerate his retirement. "I have one more career in me," Sulzberger recalls Frankel's saying. Frankel wanted to write a memoir. His wife, Joyce Purnick, would undergo treatment for breast cancer in the early fall. (She successfully completed her treatments two weeks ago.) Having lost his first wife to cancer, Frankel would be getting something that the editorship did not provide: time.

Sulzberger offered Frankel's job to Lelyveld in January. They both have weekend homes in the New Paltz area, and the Sulzbergers invited the Lelyvelds over for coffee. "We went for a walk in the woods, and he popped the question," Lelyveld recalls. "It was a very touching moment."

Lelyveld knew that when he was elevated the *Times* would have to choose a new managing editor. He made a list of half a dozen editors at the paper, he recalls, and felt out a couple. Both the editorial-page editor, Howell Raines, and an assistant managing editor, Jack Rosenthal, said they liked what they were doing and did not wish to be considered. Lelyveld says he was looking "for somebody strong who complements you in an interesting way, not just a duplicative way."

Many editors and reporters at the *Times* thought that Lelyveld and Frankel were too much alike. What they were looking for was a managing editor to counterbalance the brilliant but forbidding Lelyveld—someone who could be not just a sounding board for Lelyveld but an ear for the staff, as Arthur Gelb was in his capacity as deputy managing editor under A. M. Rosenthal, back in the late seven-

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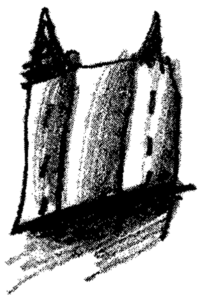
ties and early eighties. What people at the *Times* worried about was that two values—equal opportunity and maintenance of the *Times'* rigorous standards—would collide. Many worried that the assistant managing editor Gerald Boyd, who is forty-three and is black, might have been Lelyveld's first choice. Boyd has never been a foreign correspondent and just last year became responsible for supervising the paper's foreign desk, among other areas. "Gerald is first-rate. But you can't rush his advancement," one senior editor says. Others have questions about Boyd, and say that he has a brusque manner much like that of Lelyveld. And there is one additional consideration in the naming of the next managing editor: whoever it is will logically be considered a candidate to become executive editor. "You can't make him the first black managing editor of the *Times* and then not make him executive editor when Joe retires," a well-connected figure at the paper says of Boyd. "It would be a slap in the face. Yet to make the appointment today would add to the perception that we are too politically correct."

The *Times* columnist Anna Quindlen, who is forty-one, and who is close to Sulzberger, was thought to be another leading contender. She would be a more popular choice than Boyd in the newsroom, but her appointment, like Boyd's, might be thought of as one made for reasons of political correctness, since her résumé is also short on foreign experience, and on editing experience. Quindlen is an accomplished novelist and would be reluctant to pursue an editing post. And in any case Sulzberger is reluctant to lose her column. For these reasons, evidently, he and Lelyveld felt they had to look elsewhere. There was one other reason. "He wants a managing editor who will not handcuff his choice of the next executive editor," someone familiar with Sulzberger's thinking says. So Lelyveld and Sulzberger chose the Chernenko option. They did what the Politburo did after the death of General Secretary Yuri Andropov, in 1984: it appointed a caretaker, Konstantin Chernenko, rather than risk choosing the younger Mikhail Gorbachev.



The Chernenko option at the *Times* eliminated anyone younger than Lelyveld, leaving only two obvious choices: Jack Rosenthal, fifty-eight, who was the editor of the editorial page and now edits the Sunday magazine; and David R. Jones, sixty-one, also an assistant managing editor, who was the national editor from 1972 to 1987, and who would probably enjoy less internal acclaim than Rosenthal. The Chernenko option offered Lelyveld and Sulzberger two other choices: they could reach into the lower ranks of editors, or they could reach outside the paper to someone like Roberts.

"Gene Roberts was Joe's idea," Sulzberger says, explaining that Lelyveld mentioned Roberts to him in March. Lelyveld worked for Roberts when he was the national editor of the paper, and kept in touch with him over the years. They had dinner in March when Roberts, who now teaches journalism at the University of Maryland, was in town as a judge for the Pulitzer Prizes. "I have a problem I could use your counsel on," Lelyveld recalls saying about picking his successor. Lelyveld called him a few days later. "He gave me wise counsel," Lelyveld says.

Roberts said, "What would really do it for you is if you could find someone who would be there two or three years and allow you to focus on who you want for the role."

"It's what Arthur Gelb did for Max," Lelyveld said, recalling how Gelb served as managing editor until the end of 1989. "I would not have been ready to be managing editor for Max right away." Then Lelyveld took a deep breath and said, "How about you?" Roberts asked, "Are you kidding?"

Lelyveld wasn't. They continued talking, and Lelyveld flew to Washington to talk some more. "I fell in love with the idea," Lelyveld says. "Gene is a complete newspaperman in a way few *Times* people are. We're going into new things over the next several years. New technology. New printing plants. Later deadlines. We will have the capacity to publish more sections. Gene's a past-master of the kinds of issues we have to face. He reinvented the *Inquirer*. He's been marinated in these kinds of things as long as he's been an editor." Sulzberger was enthusiastic for another reason as well. "I was so pleased that Joe was thinking in the broadest possible way," he says. "This was the biggest decision he faced, and he approached this choice in a very exciting way. It was a bold idea."

Three days before the announcements were made, Sulzberger would not speak of the pending management changes. But in an interview in his eleventh-floor office he did speak enthusiastically of Frankel's legacy. "I can list a dozen things, some of which I will be grateful for for the rest of my life," said Sulzberger, who is twenty-one years younger than Frankel. "He trained me in what it means to be a publisher. I came in as a new kid. It wasn't easy for him." He spoke of Frankel's "calm," the "rebirth of sports and metropolitan coverage," the fact that the New York *Times* has now eclipsed the Los Angeles *Times* as the nation's largest-circulation seven-day-a-week newspaper. (The *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* publish just five days a week.) "But the heart of Max's legacy," he went on, "is that in the worst economic situation newspapers have faced since the Great Depression he kept the newsroom of the *Times* intact and practiced great journalism. Look how many newspapers didn't do that. He opened up the newsroom and said to the business side, 'Look at and study our numbers.' And the fact is that we bought it. He held it all together. He had a terrible [financial] hand to play." The year after Frankel arrived, the stock market crashed, and the *Times'* advertising base began to erode. In 1987, the paper carried 123,237,300 lines of advertising; in 1993, it carried 77,786,600 lines.

Adam Moss, the editorial director of the *Times Magazine*, observed, "Editorially, Max did the hardest thing. He changed the definition of news so that news is context, and not just what happened yesterday." Frankel calls it "analytical writing." To reward good writers, Frankel did what Ben Bradlee did as editor of the Washington *Post:* he encouraged star reporters to have a voice. And so readers of the *Times* have been treated to the panache and the prose of Maureen Dowd, Thomas Friedman, and Michael Kelly, in Washington; Frank Rich and Francis X. Clines, in New York; Bill Keller, in South Africa; and Alessandra Stanley and Michael Specter, in Moscow. To Frankel's and Lelyveld's credit, the institution has bent to accommodate and retain talent, as it refused to bend in the sixties and seventies to keep Gay Talese, David Halberstam, J. Anthony Lukas, Gloria Emerson, and Richard Reeves.

More individualistic voices are not always a blessing for a national institution like the *Times*, however. Liberation from old formulas invites excesses. Take Douglas Jehl's April 5th piece. Jehl described a day in which President Clinton took "a cavalcade of aides with him to witness both baseball's opening day and college basketball's last one." The reader was treated to vivacious prose, a hallmark of the Frankel-Lelyveld era, but also to yet another display of the reporter as theatre critic, with smart-alecky asides about Clinton's athletic prowess and how the Clintons had begun the day with a chaotic Easter Egg Roll on the White House lawn. Currently, the editorial page, under Howell Raines, is more vividly written than it has been in years. But, while the editorials are livelier, they are in the fiery, populist voice of Raines. At a January congressional retreat in Virginia, members of Congress complained about Raines, rather than about the *Times*, in assailing the paper's editorials. If the paper's editorials are closely identified with a single individual, the advantage is that the paper speaks with a clear voice. The danger is that this voice may carry less institutional authority than a more magisterial and anonymous editorial page once did.

"AUTHORITY" is an important word for the *Times* and for its next editor. The opinionated prose that the paper now offers both in its news columns and on its editorial page has probably lessened its authority with some readers, as one senior staff member who is an unabashed liberal concedes: "The *Times* is politically correct. It bends over backward to make sure it does not offend the black population. The gay population is treated with less severity than others. It's not so much political correctness. The *Times* is very much a liberal newspaper. That makes it feel more partisan to a reader." Bill Kovach, who is the curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard and former Washington bureau chief of the *Times*, says that the *Times* remains a great newspaper, but he worries that too much editorialization has crept into its news columns. "It has shaken a lot of its readers," he says. "That's bound to happen any time you change."

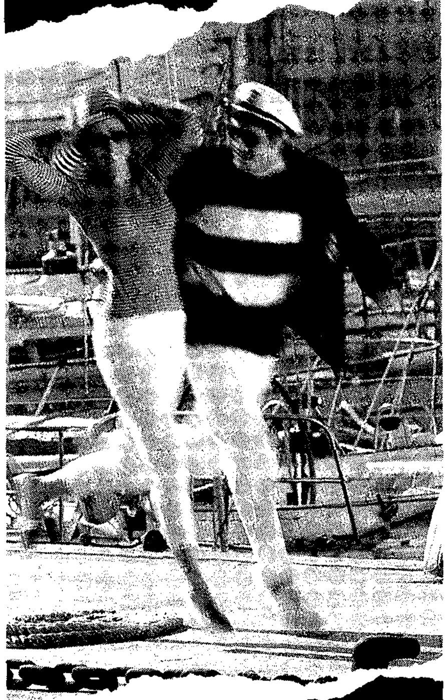
There are internal challenges for the next editor—challenges that matter more to those who work at the *Times* than to its readers. Can Lelyveld create a more humane work environment? Can Roberts, who agreed to serve for just three years, introduce more "serious fun," as Lelyveld oddly put it in his Thursday memo to the staff? Can Lelyveld put in place a bench of talented editors, so that when the next executive editor is chosen the publisher will have a candidate who is as generally respected as Lelyveld is?

Bill Kovach thinks that the Lelyveld-Roberts combination will be superb for those who work at the *Times*. "Gene is the best choice," he says. "Gene is the most approachable, accessible person you can talk to. The best advice I ever got from an editor was from Gene. He said, 'If someone wants to talk to you, just listen. You let them talk long enough and they'll see the solution themselves.' He's a listener."

The challenge that matters more to the readers of the *Times* is whether the next editor can maintain the paper's authority as the world's preëminent source of news. In the putative world of five hundred—or five thousand—channels, where viewers can program for themselves, where instant information subverts weekly newsmagazines, where databases or facts can be summoned to the screen without the newspaper package in which they originally appeared, it will be important to have at least one unassailable source of common information.

The editorial challenge for the *Times*, according to Kovach, is to hold on to its authority and reliability "in an age of increasing fragmentation, subjectivity, and confusion about the place of public-interest journalism in a commercial marketplace." He says, "We're only getting into a world of a hundred and fifty to three hundred different voices, and can see the trouble this has already caused. None of us quite know where to put our feet down. It's almost like vertigo. The competition distorts the news process. In the end, there will be a more acute need in a fragmented country for some institution that speaks with the same voice every day and provides a sense of cohesiveness to the people of the country."

At a time when journalism stoops to compete, the appointments of Lelyveld and Roberts send a reassuring signal about news standards. Meanwhile, the departure of Frankel will go smoothly. He does not leave his job reluctantly, as his predecessor did. He was not averse to appointing a strong deputy, Lelyveld, and entrusting him with power. "This is a real testimonial to the kind of guy Max is," Anna Quindlen says. "Max didn't bring a poisonous ego to this job. He did what he came to do. So now he can leave." ♦



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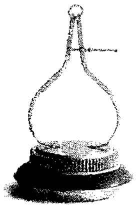

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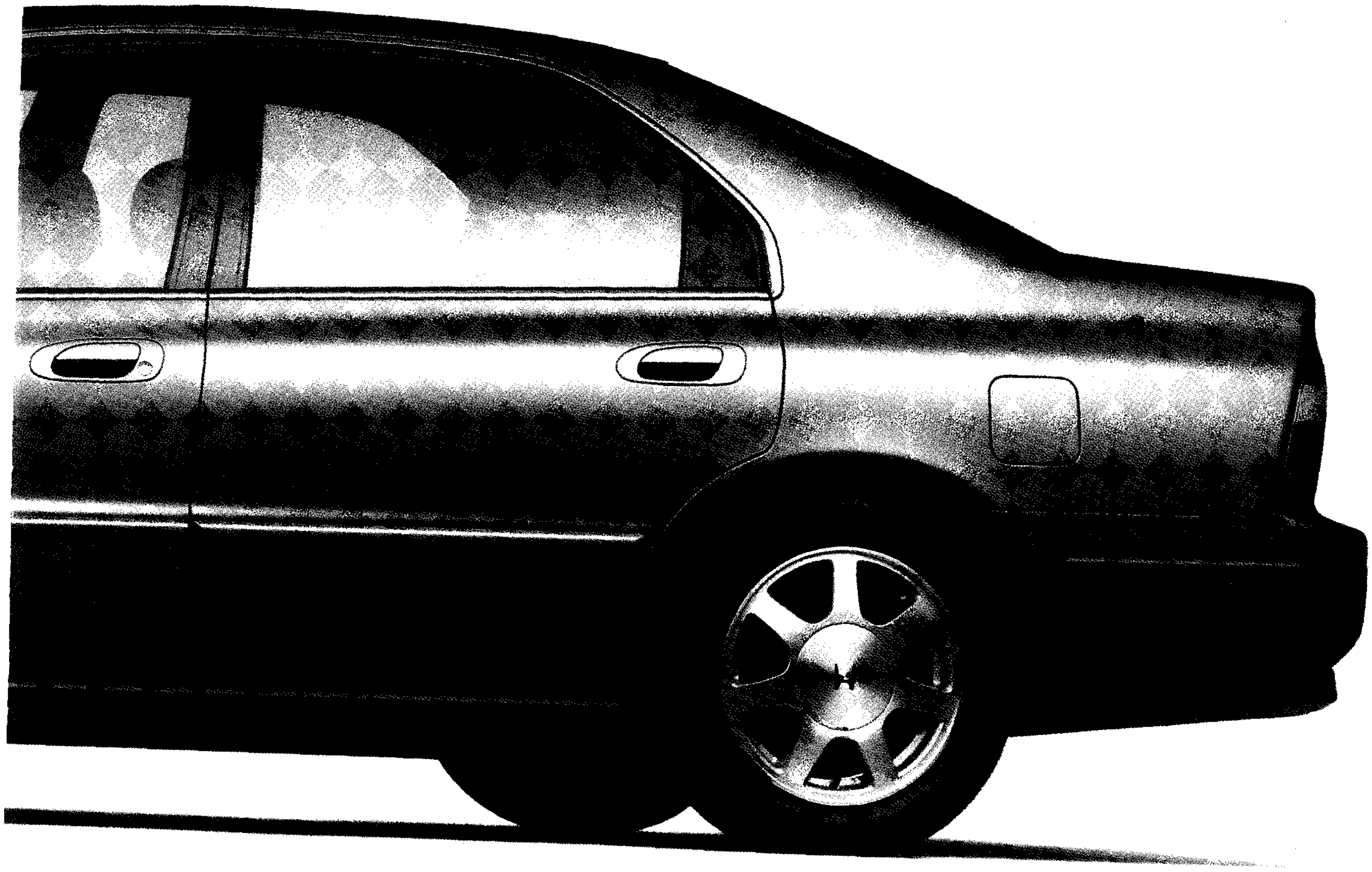

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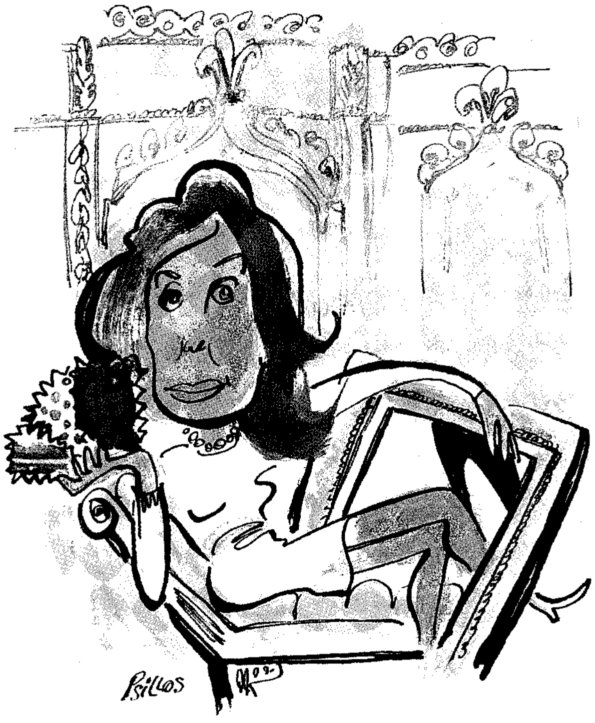
POPULAR CHRONICLES

THIS IS PERFECT

Tastemaker of the moment Rose Tarlow dictates the way Hollywood moguls of the moment should live, and won't stop until the place is perfect.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

GETTING Rose Tarlow to decorate your house is not an easy thing. To start with, you have to be extremely persuasive. Sometimes it is easier to buy a nice house than to talk Tarlow into decorating it. This is what happened in David Geffen's case. A few years ago, Jack Warner's house was up for sale. The Warner house is a big place in Bel-Air, with five bedrooms, a screening room, a sunroom, a nursery suite, and an office; there's eighteenth-century wood panelling in some rooms and Art Deco detailing in others; and there are tennis courts, a neoclassical swimming pool, a golf course, a caddy shack, a maids' house, and twelve acres of woods, lawns, formal gardens, informal gardens, driveways, a pergola, a fountain, classical stone statuary, and panoramic views. Geffen had a long-standing fondness for this house, so when Jack Warner's widow died and her estate put the house on the market he snapped it up for forty-seven and a half million dollars. Easy. Then he started pestering Tarlow to fix it up. "I was absolutely not interested," Tarlow says. "He kept asking. I kept saying no. I think no one ever says no to David, so I kept him intrigued."



David Geffen finally got Tarlow—who doesn't do houses—to do his, and it will be one of the best in town.

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

Tarlow, a furniture designer, an *antiquaire*, the owner of a tony design shop in Los Angeles, and a person of famously good taste, had decorated only a couple of places before this: a thirty-thousand-square-foot house belonging to a very rich family in Australia; Edgar Bergen's old house in Holmby Hills, which is now owned by a film producer; and Barbara Walters' house in Bel-Air. Tarlow's favorite thing in the world is to say that she is not a decorator. Nonetheless, everyone in Hollywood with a couple of million dollars and some nagging insecurities about furniture wants her to decorate his or her house. She says that because Geffen is a friend of hers she agreed to take a look at the contents of the Warner house—for forty-seven and a half million, it came with some old chairs and stuff—so she gave Geffen her opinion of the antiques, and then she found herself shopping with him for furniture, and then she began drawing plans for building a new pool house and reorganizing some of the bedroom space, and the next thing she knew she was dispatching workmen to tear down walls, rip up plumbing, recess light switches behind hand-carved panelling, cut ceilings for skylights, and stain floors five times to get the perfect golden hue. That was two and a half years ago.

She is still working on the house, and figures it will be another year or so until she is satisfied that she has got it right.

Tarlow says that she finally consented to do the Warner house because David Geffen is very charming and very persistent, but the real reason is that if Tarlow is around anything that she doesn't think is perfect, she cannot restrain herself for very long from trying to make it so. Things other people might not mind looking at—telephones, minor Picassos, rolls of toilet paper, and forty-seven-and-a-half-million-dollar not quite finished fixer-uppers—drive her crazy. She is also so discerning that it's scary. She will glance at what appears to be, say, a bouquet of flowers, a big brown chair, an O.K.-looking lamp, and an old toy horse, and in an instant declare one awful, one terrible, one a horrible mess, and one just perfect, not necessarily in that order and not necessarily referring to qualities that a less discerning person would have noticed. The unnerving thing is that as soon as she makes the declarations they seem plainly right. During a few days I spent with her, I would try to guess ahead of time which things Tarlow liked and which she found hideously deficient. I would also try to identify themes. I woke up one morning thinking about a few things in her house—specifically, some gigantic paving stones and a pair of big carved horses from Thailand—and suddenly thought, I get it! She likes large objects only! And when I saw her next I mentioned casually that it seemed that her taste was strictly for furniture and objects of monumental scale. She looked slightly impatient and said, "Not *necessarily*. Something small can be perfect. It doesn't have to be big." She dug around on her desk and picked up a palm-size sterling-silver flask covered with woven straw and said, "See this? This is perfect. This is really good. It isn't big, is it?" I conceded that it was indeed not big, and then spent the next hour or so trying to figure out what a little silver flask had in common with huge slabs of French stone and a pair of big white seventeenth-century carved horses. It was a little like taking an I.Q. test and having to pick out the right pair of twins. I flunked most of my attempts. After guessing that the theme of her taste was loyalty to large objects, I tried rustic, then French, then wooden, and then a sort of meta-theme of "enormous quantities of anything massed together in an interesting way." These were also wrong. I thought that at the very least it was clear that she liked only old things—after all, she had run a distinguished antique business, and she designs furniture that is adapted from old pieces—and one day I mentioned this in the most offhand way, since I thought it was so obvious. She raised her eyebrows and then said that the next place she intends to live in is an extremely contemporary house, which she plans to design herself. At that point, I stopped making guesses. Tarlow does love many rustic, French, wooden, old, and massed-together-in-interesting-ways things, but that is not the whole picture—the whole picture is something more subtle and more deeply wired inside her head. If you ask her to explain it, she says, "I like really good things. Simple things. I like anything interesting. I know it when I see it."

TARLOW has always lived in pretty places. She was born in Shanghai, but when she was still a baby her family moved to New York. She grew up in an apartment on Fifth Avenue near the Frick Museum, and in a summer house on the ocean in Deal, New Jersey, which was so big that when it burned down its yard was used as the site for a beach club and about a dozen ordinary-size houses. Every summer, Tarlow would repaint her bedroom and rearrange the furniture in an effort to get the room exactly right. She also enjoyed assembling things on her mantelpiece in a visually satisfying way. This was when she was a little kid. If you were the owner of a forty-seven-and-a-half-million-dollar house, you would undoubtedly find it reassuring to know that the person putting it together for you had a good-looking bedroom when she was ten. Tarlow went to boarding school in New Jersey; when she reminisces about her years there, she gets sentimental over the *boiserie*, and the petrified-wood panelling in the bathrooms of the dorms.

Tarlow has the sort of mature aspect of someone who has probably always looked adult. She is now in her late forties. She has smooth chestnut hair, dark arched eyebrows, and an assertive jawline. She once told me she hates being called petite, but she is in fact petite. Her clothes are conservative, dark, tidy, and refined—the clothes of some-

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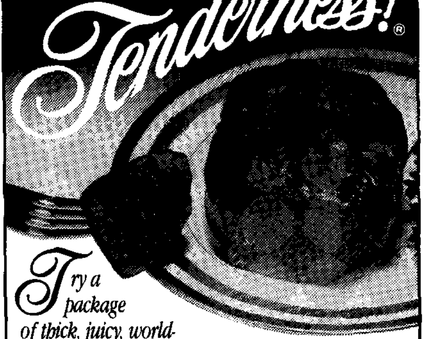

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one who doesn't love clothes but knows what nice ones look like. In a million years, you could not imagine her in a Southern California-style pastel nylon appliquéd warmup suit, shopping at a mini-mall. She seems to like to be a little mysterious. People who know her have described her to me as prickly and imperious and impatient, but she mainly comes across as nonchalant—someone who is unshakably sure of her own mind. She makes a lot of powerful, definitive statements in a voice of absolutely flat affect, probably because she doesn't expect to have to argue any of her points. In particular, she has an unspectacular way of dismissing what other people might find impressive. This can include her own accomplishments, which she usually waves off as accidental, or as the result of having been coerced, or as something she never intended, or, at the very least, as something that she would now gladly abandon for a life of working on her watercolor paintings or taking her horses for a ride. If her standards aren't met, she can be cavalier about other people's accomplishments as well. Once, she took me to a house that had an extensive collection of paintings, including Picassos, Franz Klines, and Mirós. As we were leaving, she said, "Did you see those paintings?" I assumed that she meant they were dazzling. Instead, she rolled her eyes and said, "They were just awful. Terrible. And all over the place."

ONE recent afternoon, Tarlow dropped by to see how the work on the Warner house was proceeding. "It's a big project," Tarlow said. "We've been at it for two and a half years so far, but this kind of house is slow." As she was parking, she motioned toward a row of garden statues and said, "This is going. All this. Awful. All the gingerbread on the outside of the house: going. All of it. We're simplifying. The place was a mess. We're getting rid of all the horrible stuff. When we're done, it's going to be the best house in town."

A workman walked out onto the driveway, holding a piece of wood that looked like walnut. "Rose, come look at this floor," he said. "This is the twelfth sample I've stained, and I think we've finally got the color."

Tarlow got out of the car, examined the piece, remarked that she didn't like the color on one part of the wood, and said to the workman, "Try it one more time. We're close. We're really close. Once more and I think it'll be right." After he left, she said, "I told David when I started this that I was going to spend all his money. He said that would be fine. We have a great working relationship. He's really interested in what's going on." She crossed the foyer and stood in what will eventually be the dining area, with double-height ceilings, dentil molding, inlaid floors, and three walls of windows. Any fewer than twenty people would feel lost in this room. "This is perfect for David," Tarlow said. "He prefers to entertain informally."

She strolled through the "gossip room" (oval-shaped, and soon to include a black marble sink with a foot-operated faucet and a rare Japanese screen), the nursery (scheduled to become the gym), Jack Warner's old office (lined in butter-colored crackled leather, which will be left untouched), dining-room-size bedrooms, bedroom-size bathrooms, and the downstairs screening room. Most of the house is still raw wood, scaffolding, drop cloths, and sawhorses, but it is possible to imagine it turning out to be a good-looking place. After giving some instructions to the floor man and the wall man, Tarlow went outside to inspect a sample of trim that would replace the curlicues Jack Warner had installed under the eaves. "No, no, I don't like it," she told the carpenter. "I want something with more of an angle on the bottom. It has to be like this." She took a pencil from his shirt pocket and marked on the piece of trim in his hand.

"Rose, they don't have anything like that," the carpenter said, looking sheepish.

She cocked her head and said, "Well, then, let's *make* it."

OFTEN, Tarlow has found herself in the position of having to make something herself in order to satisfy her taste. When she was a young woman, newly married, in Los Angeles, she decided to get into the antique business. Her husband staked her to fifty-five thousand dollars toward her first batch of inventory, and she went to Paris to buy. She had, in the meantime, rented a space on a fancy block of Melrose Place, in Los Angeles. She didn't know much about running a business, but she knew she wanted to sell interesting things she really liked. She went to Paris and spent her fifty-five thousand dollars at antique shops and at the flea market. The shipper, who was responsible for picking up the merchandise and sending it back to her otherwise empty store, took the money, lost it all at the racetrack, and then killed himself. Approximately half of what Tarlow had paid for made its way to Los Angeles, but it was not half a shipment of whole pieces—it was a whole shipment of halves and quarters of pieces: parts of armoires and chunks of chairs. At this point, Tarlow learned very quickly how to build furniture and re-create antique finishes on wood. With the store's opening imminent, she was so far behind and so understaffed and had her hands so full with her two young sons that her hairdresser came in to help set things up. This was 1975, when there were few fine-antique dealers in Los Angeles, and even fewer who were selling antiques that were half old and half new. As Tarlow remembers it, most people in Los Angeles at that time thought the zenith of interior design was exposed brick, a pool table, English pub signs, and clean towels by the Jacuzzi. In her store, which is known formally as Rose Tarlow / Melrose House, she had an enormous birdcage filled with bright-colored finches, and high-end Oriental and French antiques. Somehow, it was a success from the day it opened.

Tarlow decided that her retailing rule of thumb was to be nice to everyone. One day, she was nice to an unassuming Japanese man who wandered into the shop. He told her that someday he would come back and buy everything in her store. A month later, he came back and bought everything in her store. Another time, a decorator came in and said he was having trouble finding a particular kind of chair, so Tarlow decided to design it for him, because, she says, she thought it would help him out, and it would be fun to try, and she had nothing better to do at that moment. Coincidentally, the European wholesale antique market was getting wildly inflated: a Régence chair that she used to be able to find for seven thousand dollars was now twenty-four thousand, and to make it worth finding, shipping, and presenting in a store in this country meant marking it up to a price no one would pay. Tarlow discovered that she was

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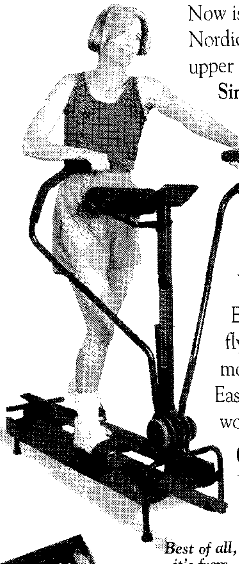

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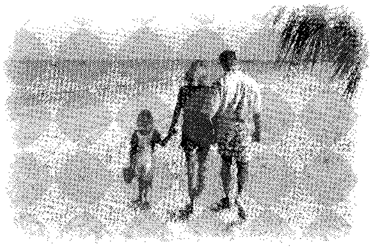

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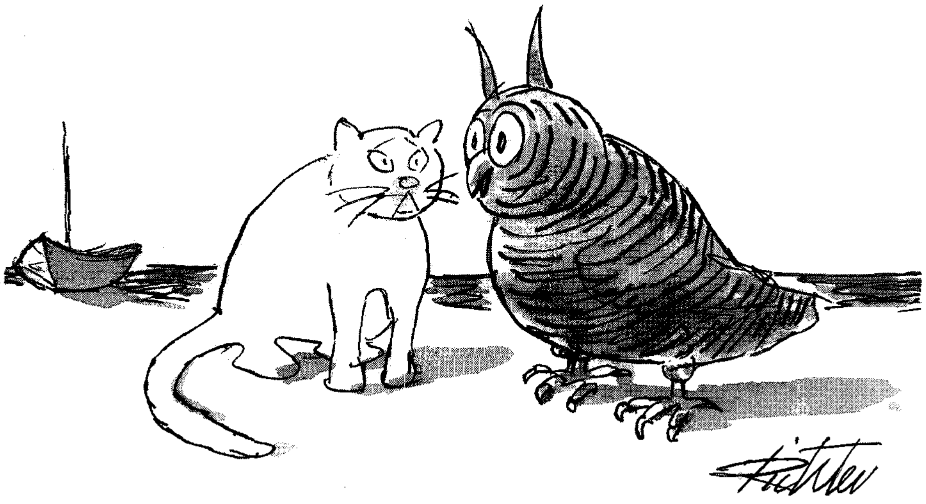

"I won't lie. There have been other pussycats."

• •

good at designing furniture—she would take inspiration from a classic piece and then fiddle with some of the details—and she also discovered that it was more profitable than rooting around for rare and overpriced originals. She now sells much more furniture of her own design than antiques.

After Tarlow and her husband were divorced, they sold their Brentwood house to Linda Ronstadt. The house Tarlow lives in now, in Bel-Air, is on the edge of a sheer hill. When the house was being built, construction material being delivered would have to be off-loaded from a normal-sized truck at the bottom of the driveway and divided into loads that would fit on trucks tiny enough to make it up the hill. Tarlow designed the house herself and then had an engineer draft the blueprints for it. It is L-shaped, with huge, high windows, creamy stucco walls, and Boston ivy growing on the interior living-room walls. Most of the furniture and the other objects in the house are ivory or brown or white. Modern necessities, like telephones and toilets, are concealed in antique wooden boxes. The floor in the living room is seventeenth- and eighteenth-century oak, from France, and the one in the dining room is thick old stone from the French countryside. The ceilings are crossed with molasses-colored beams from an eleventh-century church in Kent, England. It took five trips to bring the beams up the hill. The deliverymen left the beams in a pile at the top of the driveway, where they looked alarmingly like a gigantic order of Chinese spareribs. The fact that Tarlow had never taken any courses in architecture did not faze her, but the sight of the family-size order of ribs gave her a start. Over all, the place has the rugged, sunny, otherworldly ambience of an old California mission. After I saw it, I wanted a house just like it. This emotion has overwhelmed other people as well. Some of them have even scraped together the spare change to do something about it. One developer in California recently cribbed her design and built a copy of the house. It occurred to me that in addition to being an antique dealer, a furniture designer, a textile designer (she is now creating fabrics for the textile company Scalamandré), a tableware designer (she is also making dishes and silverware for Swid Powell), and a decorator, Tarlow might be interested in becoming an architect. "No interest whatsoever," she said. "I only wanted to make my own perfect place."

After Tarlow had looked in on the work on the Warner house, she decided to drive out to Silver Lake to check on her finisher. She got lost on the way, and had to call her office from her car phone to have someone there tell her where she was. Eventually, she arrived at the shop. She strolled with the finisher through stacks of club chairs, occasional tables, sideboards, chandeliers, bookcases, desks, bureaus, and knickknacks. Some were old pieces to be tidied up and put in Geffen's house. Others were pieces from Tarlow's line that had been ordered by decorators from her showroom: a big black-lacquered cabinet with chinoiserie detailing, inspired by a seventeenth-century Japanese piece; a Louis XIII-style side chair, which she makes with a wider seat and slightly pigeon-toed legs; her Regency-inspired dining table, with tapering, reeded legs; a Tuscan-style side table with corkscrew legs; and a straight-legged Louis XVI-style desk, which she makes bigger, sleeker, and less detailed than a true Louis XVI. Ordering upscale designer furniture is like buying couture clothing: it can be altered according to the client's whim. At the finishing shop, for instance, we came upon some tables and consoles of Tarlow's that she had originally produced in burnished dark wood with lacy silver inlays and that were now being made to order for a foreign potentate who wanted them inlaid with gold leaf and painted bright green. The sight of these pieces made Tarlow look, for a moment, a little woozy. The finisher ran his finger over the edge of one of the green pieces, then shrugged at her and smiled. Tarlow smiled back. "This is why I stay away," she said. "I walk through here and I get upset."

On our way back to her showroom, Tarlow showed me a letter she'd got recently from a "competition adviser" who was looking for someone to decorate the new house being built by a computer zillionaire. The letter said, "[Mr. and Mrs. Zillionaire] are preparing to begin the exciting process of design for the interiors of their estate. . . . [Mrs. Zillionaire] will be the driving force behind decision making and shall receive my guidance and council throughout the process. . . . Following my effort to give [Mrs. Zillionaire] extensive exposure to the best design work being done in the country, a list of designers falling within an acceptable range of taste and quality was developed. The selection process will be conducted in a manner that will assure fairness to all invited to participate." The letter was accompanied by a thick, glossy book with color photographs of the construction site.

I said, "Are you going to apply?"

Tarlow looked at me as if I had lost my mind.

Tarlow's shop is in a little ivy-covered building set half a lot back from the sidewalk. It is open only to the trade, and there is nothing fancy about it—just lots of furniture and books of fabric swatches scattered around a big, lofty room. Walking in, Tarlow was met by her design assistant, Jane Eschen, who was overseeing a photographer shooting a picture of some of Tarlow's furniture for an ad. The centerpiece of the arrangement was a towering cinnabar Ming cabinet that cost several hundred thousand dollars. Hanging behind it was a Tarlow-designed mirror with a frame that looked as if it were made of gilded tree branches; the mirror cost nine thousand dollars. Eschen showed Tarlow a Polaroid that had been taken to check the arrangement and the lights.

Tarlow said, "This is awful."

Eschen looked at her. Tarlow tapped the picture. "Look. All the white behind it. That cabinet. It doesn't work at all." Tarlow put down her car keys and walked into the center of the shop, where the photographer was standing on a ladder with a silver umbrella.

"Rose," he said, hesitantly.

"We'll fix it," she said. She stood for a moment and looked around the room. She was dressed in a smart navy suit with a short skirt and a pair of high heels. After a moment, she pushed her sleeves up slightly and then hauled a side chair across the room and put it in front of the cabinet, moved a vase that had been sitting on it, and opened the door of the cabinet to block most of the white wall behind it. The photographer took another Polaroid and then showed it to her.

"I hate this chair," she said.

Eschen grimaced and said, "Oh."

"It's too gold," Tarlow said. "I hate it."

"We've had it in the line forever," Eschen said.

"Well, I hate it," Tarlow said. She pointed at the cabinet and said, "It's not good with that." She hauled the chair back to the other side of the room.

The photographer looked through his viewfinder and said, "Rose, it's great now. You did it."

She took a deep breath and shook her head. She stood back and contemplated the arrangement. Her eyes were squinted and her arms were crossed. Everyone in the room stood still in anticipation. After a moment, she pushed up her sleeves again, strode across the room, moved the cabinet door a quarter of an inch, shifted the vase an eighth of an inch, and then said, "There. It's right now. It's perfect. I couldn't stand it before." ♦

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CONVERSATIONS WITH A KILLER

John Wayne Gacy murdered thirty-three boys and became America's most notorious killer. He is scheduled to be executed in May, but he is far from reconciled to his fate. A rare interview and excerpts from his previously unseen writings offer a window into Gacy's world, where he still claims to be "the thirty-fourth victim."

BY ALEC WILKINSON

JOHN WAYNE GACY is obsessively fond of defending his innocence, which is imaginary. On March 12, 1980, he was convicted in Chicago of killing thirty-three boys. The murders took place between 1972 and 1978, when he was caught and arrested. No one else in America has ever been convicted of killing so many people. Twenty-seven of the bodies were buried in a crawl space beneath the house where Gacy lived, in a neighborhood out by O'Hare Airport. About many of the murders there was a suggestion of sexual torture. Twenty-one of the murders were committed before Illinois had enacted a death penalty, and for those Gacy was sentenced to twenty-one terms of life in prison. For the others, he was sentenced to death. He is to be killed on the tenth of May. On the night he was arrested, he gave the police an account of the murders; his lawyers asked him not to, but he insisted. He told them more the next day and more on the day after that. Then he began saying that he knew nothing about any of the murders except one, that of a boy he brought home from a Greyhound bus station and had sex with, then killed after the boy attacked him with a knife from his kitchen. On occasion, he has said that the only crime he is guilty of was operating a cemetery without a license.

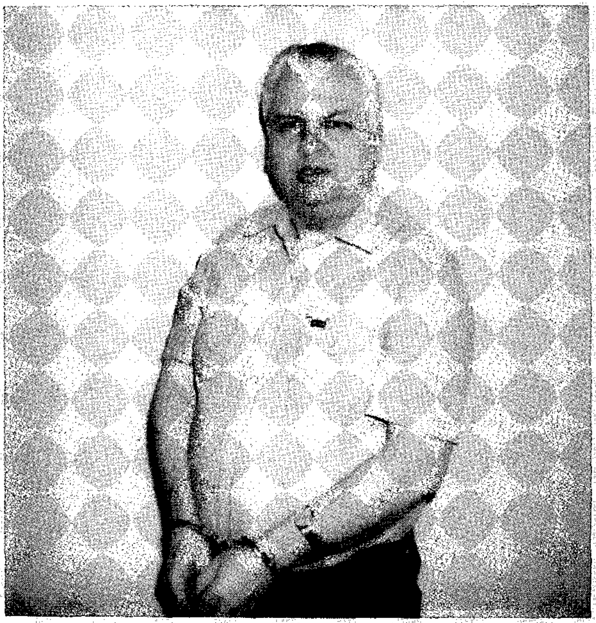
When Gacy says that he knows nothing about the murders, it's impossible to tell if he really has no memory of them or is just saying that he doesn't. He says that twelve people—a cleaning woman, some friends, a bookkeeper, and some carpenters who worked for the small contracting company he owned—had keys to his house and could have buried bodies in the crawl space while he was travelling on business. All the murders took place in his house, nearly all between three and six in the morning. A neighbor said that now and then she heard screams from the house in the middle of the night; she called the police, but whenever they knocked on Gacy's door he told them that nothing was wrong. They never heard anyone screaming. After Gacy was arrested, he said that he had paid a hundred and fifty boys for sex. Sometimes he only brought them to his house and took off his clothes and talked to them and gave them advice and drinks and something to eat. He killed the ones who raised their prices after striking an agreement, and those who he thought might tell his neighbors how he obtained his sexual satisfaction. Boys who seemed to feel bad about having had sex with him fell into the second category. The boy from the bus station was stabbed, the others were strangled. Some were hustlers from an area of Chicago called Bughouse Square, some worked for Gacy, and some had run away from home to Chicago and encountered Gacy and agreed to service him for money. Saying that he was going to show them a trick, he persuaded them to allow him to loop a rope around their necks. He tied three knots in the rope and inserted a stick between two of them, then tightened the noose by turning the stick. Once, as he was turning the stick the phone rang. When he left the room to answer it, the boy was still standing. The person on the other end of the line was a contractor calling about a job. Gacy discussed the job, and when he returned the boy was dead on the floor and had lost control of his bladder. A few times, Gacy killed two boys in one night. Sometimes he kept a boy's corpse in his closet for a day before burying him. He poured acid on some of the corpses and lime on others, then buried them in graves about a foot deep. He buried one of the boys in his yard and another beneath the floor of his garage. The bodies in the crawl space were buried so close together that when the police dug up the first one they found the head of another at its feet. In some of the graves, the bodies were buried on top of each other. When no room was left in the crawl space, Gacy thought for a while about keeping corpses in his attic. The last four bodies he dropped at night off a bridge above the Des Plaines River, about seventy-five miles south of Chicago. He thought that one of the bodies might have landed on a barge. On the way to the bridge with a body in the trunk, he once picked up a hitchhiker. The hitchhiker said that he would exchange sex for money, but Gacy decided not to.

Gacy lives on death row at the Menard Correctional Center, near Chester, Illinois. Chester is on the Mississippi River, about eighty-five miles southeast of St. Louis. The part of the prison where Gacy is confined sits on a hill above the river, but he cannot see the river; he has no windows in his cell. He was thirty-six when he was arrested; he is fifty-two now. He is five feet eight and weighs two hundred and thirty pounds. Confinement has left his skin pale. His hair has turned white. His face is broad and round. He had a mustache when he was arrested, but he doesn't anymore. His eyes are small and remote and measuring. His hands are delicate. He has no tattoos. The guards call him J.W. or John Wayne or Gacy or, sometimes, Chester Molester.

For twelve years following his conviction, while his lawyers filed appeals, Gacy said no to anyone who asked for an interview. The requests were constant. Oprah Winfrey sent a handwritten letter. So did Truman Capote. Two years ago, Gacy spoke with a television reporter from Chicago, and then fell silent again. His reticence has mainly to do with his feeling that the press has portrayed him as a monster, and that the bulk of what has been written and broadcast about him is "theory and fantasy." He often says that he has "no ego for fame." He is, however, by no means reclusive. Since he arrived at Menard, he has answered approximately twenty-seven thousand letters. He talks on the phone with a number of people, whom he calls collect, and he receives visitors more often than any other inmate of the prison. Some of the people who visit have written to him for a while and believe from the avuncular and benevolent tone he strives for in his letters that he cares about them; some are law students interested in his case; some are opponents of the death penalty; some believe that he is a great man; some are curious about him for sexual reasons; some feel themselves to be outcasts and think that they have something in common with him; some have read about him or seen his picture and believe that he resembles the sympathetic idea they have formed of him in their minds; and some think that he is innocent, and are trying to help him prove it.

Over the winter, I received a call from an acquaintance who said that Gacy was willing to be interviewed. She asked if I was interested, and I said I guessed so. What I hoped was that I would meet someone who had arrived by reflection at an acceptance of his past and was preparing to meet his end with dignity.

Visiting Gacy is like spending time with a person who is pretending to like you in order to separate you, violently, if necessary, from something you possess. A haughtiness in his manner suggests that he thinks he is smarter than anyone he is talking to, but it is unlikely that if he were not also capable of charm in the service of deception so many of those boys would have got into his car in the middle of the night. He appears to have no inner being. I often had the feeling that he was like an actor who had created a role and polished it so carefully that he had become the role and the role had become him. What personality he may once have had collapsed long ago and has been replaced by a catalogue of gestures and attitudes and portrayals of sanity. In support of his innocence, he often says things that are deranged in their logic, but he says them so calmly that he appears to be rational and reasonable. He has concealed the complexity of his character so assiduously that a person is left to imagine the part of him that carried out the murders. Three other killers had visitors on days when I was talking to Gacy, and they gave me an impression of anxiety and violence. Compared with them, Gacy seemed tranquil. If I saw him among a crowd, I might take him for a truck driver or an autoworker, or maybe the warden of a prison.



A snapshot taken in February of Gacy on death row in Illinois. He says, "I didn't know how to think like a con; it wasn't part of my nature."

Talking to Gacy requires patience. He doesn't listen to what you say, and consider it, and then respond. He merely defends himself. It is difficult to ask him a question that a detective or a prosecutor or a defense attorney or a psychiatrist has not already asked him and that he does not have an answer for. He goes over the same ground again and again. His voice rarely changes pitch; when he is excited, it is the result of uneasiness or apprehension, not enthusiasm. He is fond of the phrase "knowingly knew," as in "He knowingly knew I was out of state at the time." He uses it when he wishes to emphasize an injustice he believes he has suffered: "He knowingly knew I was innocent, but he still claimed I killed the boy."

He seems to have no capacity for intimacy or friendship. Another person makes no impression on him at all. One day, he and I looked through a scrapbook of photographs. There were pictures of his father and mother, his two sisters, his two wives, his son, his daughter, and people who visit and write letters, but there was not a single image of anyone he described as a friend. He says that he has no friends in the prison, either. A doctor who interviewed him after he was arrested wrote that he "conducts his life as if he possessed a complete and sensitive emotional capacity, which he has not."

After it had been arranged for me to visit Gacy, I began to feel obscurely anxious about what effect he might have on me. He struck me as someone who was overwhelmed by his interior life, and, since I have never felt anything like control over my own, I was afraid that spending time alone with him might cause something damaging to rise from my unconscious. The night before I met him, I dreamed, in a motel in Perryville, Missouri, that I was being chased at night across a desert by a huge hooded figure riding a black horse. The figure had a crossbow. Once I had met Gacy, I realized that I was nothing like him, and my fears subsided, but I continued to have dreams in which he seemed to figure as a violent and malevolent presence.

I saw Gacy on six occasions during February and March. Two visits lasted a little more than an hour, and the others lasted five or six hours—more time, he pointed out, than any other writer had ever spent with him. Occasionally, his company was so dreary that I would take off my watch, so I couldn't see how slowly the time was passing. Now and then, he struck me as being like a boor you start a conversation with in a bar and then realize you can't get rid of. Other times, the context of our conversation was so pecu-

"Looks like you're out for the season—you've got a torn rotator cuff."

liar that I didn't know how to respond. Gacy seemed unaware that he was in prison because he was a criminal. He seemed to think that I had come to see him because he was famous. I never had the feeling that he heard voices or saw things that I didn't, but he was delusional in that he believed himself to be someone else: an innocent person. He seemed to feel that if he behaved as if he were, then I would have no choice except to take him as one.

If Gacy is executed on the tenth of May, he will die on the anniversary of the first time he was arrested—in 1968, for sodomy, in Waterloo, Iowa. He was twenty-six. He and his wife had moved to Waterloo not long after Gacy graduated from Kentucky Fried Chicken's K.F.C. Chicken School, in Louisville. In Waterloo, Gacy helped run three Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises owned by his father-in-law.

The following account of Gacy's background is based on conversations with Gacy and with his lawyers, and on his confessions, the records of his psychiatric interviews, newspaper stories, Gacy's writings, his correspondence, the record of his trial, and the books "Buried Dreams," by Tim Cahill, and "Killer Clown," by Terry Sullivan. A grand jury in Black Hawk County heard testimony from two boys. One, a sophomore in high school, said that he had been spreading gravel in Gacy's driveway the summer before when Gacy asked him into his house. Gacy's wife was visiting friends in Illinois. Gacy showed him blue movies, then persuaded the boy to let Gacy go down on him. Then the boy did the same for Gacy. Gacy, he said, had also tried to bugger him. On a few occasions during the fall, Gacy paid him for sex.

The second boy washed floors and cleaned up in the kitchen at one of the restaurants, and sometimes he cooked. He said that after work one night Gacy offered to drive him home. They ended up at Gacy's house. Gacy's wife was in the hospital, giving birth to their second child. Gacy served the boy whiskey. They watched stag films, then Gacy attacked him and strangled him until he nearly passed out. When the boy revived, Gacy said that he hadn't meant to hurt him. He drove him home, and a few days later he fired him.

Word of the boys' stories spread through town in the days before the indictment was returned. The County Attorney's office found other boys who said that they had been to Gacy's house and that Gacy had asked them to go down on him or had tried to convince them to allow him to go down on them. Gacy asked to be given a lie-detector test, and he failed it. He asked to be given another, and he failed that one, too. In the County Attorney's office, it was said that the only answer he got right was his name.

In August, 1968, Gacy engaged a high-school senior to intimidate the boy who had been spreading gravel, and keep him from testifying at his trial. The senior drove the younger boy into woods outside town and sprayed Mace in his eyes, then beat him up and told him not to testify. The boy broke free and hid in a cornfield. When he got back into town, he went to the police and gave them the name of his attacker. The senior told the police that Gacy had provided the Mace and had promised to pay off his car loan.

Gacy pleaded guilty to sodomy. He expected to receive probation and to be allowed to move back to Illinois. Instead, he got ten years at the Iowa State Reformatory for Men at Anamosa. The judge said that the severity of the sentence was intended to make certain that "for some period of time you cannot seek out teenage boys to solicit them for immoral behavior of any kind." While Gacy was in the reformatory, his wife divorced him. His father died. Gacy wanted to attend the funeral, but the warden wouldn't let him.

Gacy proved to be an exceptionally coöperative prisoner. After serving eighteen months of his sentence, he was paroled, in June of 1970, and went to Chicago. There he moved into his mother's apartment and got a job in a restaurant as a cook. He often told people he met there that his ex-wife was the daughter of Colonel Sanders, the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

When Gacy was a child, his father spent hours by himself in the basement of the house where they were living, in Chicago. His wife and son and two daughters were prohibited from going down there. Through the floor they sometimes heard him talking in different voices. When he emerged, he was often drunk and likely to be violent. One evening, he struck his wife so hard that he knocked out some of her teeth, and then he chased her into the street and beat her some more.

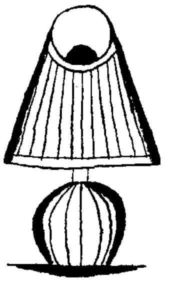
As a teen-ager, Gacy was preoccupied with his health. He had fainting spells, and he believed that he was born with a defective heart. He was not particularly attracted to girls. He considered becoming a priest. His father thought that he was effeminate. Occasionally, late at night, Gacy would have thoughts of embracing his friends. He believed that his father could tell what he was thinking. When Gacy was arrested for the murders, his mother told the police that if her husband had known that his son had had sex with men he would have killed him.

Gacy ran away from home when he was twenty. He wrote the following account, for his own purposes, a few years ago. It is part of a manuscript composed of a series of entries, usually a page or two long, but sometimes longer, covering nearly every year of his life. He gave it to me one day as I was leaving the prison. I have made a very few changes for the sake of clarity.

"In the first three months of 1962, I hadn't been working and I had my dad on my back about everything. There wasn't nothing I could do that was right to him. I had to pay him $100.00 a month as part of the money he put up so that I could get a car and by March I had fallen one payment behind. By April, he was threatening to take away the car, so on the sixth or ninth of April, I decided to run away. I knew I had a cousin out west; the last known place where she lived was Las Vegas. She was a high priced hooker, not married but with a child. She had run away from home two years before me. Uncle Ray made an attempt to talk her into coming back by making a trip out there, but she refused, since she enjoyed what she was doing and had a home of her own, with a maid. She became the black sheep of the family. In any case, I watched enough TV to know that Route 66 went out west, and that's all I had going for me when I left.

"One morning after everyone was gone from the house, I loaded the car with the personal things that I was going to take with me. Then the phone rang—mother was calling, to ask me to pick her up from work at noon, as she wasn't feeling well. I went out to Dor-O-Matic and brought her home, dropped her off and told her I was going to get the car gassed up. Then I just left. Irving Park to the Tollway, then south to Route 66, towards Springfield, Illinois. That first evening I got as far as 100 miles north of St. Louis. I pulled over to the rest area and slept in the car. The next morning, I took off across the rest of Illinois, all of Missouri, stopping to see some caves on the way, then the southeast corner of Kansas and into Oklahoma, where I spent the night in a motel. I had to watch my money, as I left home with $136.00, all I had to my name. The next morning west out of Oklahoma City, down 66 across Texas, upper part, to New Mexico. I stopped for the night in Albuquerque, again sleeping in a motel. Then across the rest of New Mexico, into Arizona, through Kingman, and on to Nevada. By late afternoon I hit Hoover Dam and was in time to go on the last tour of the day. After that Las Vegas. It's a great sight to see all those lights coming in from off the plains. There were so many motels. I couldn't believe it.

"I was so tired from the driving all I could think of was finding a place to shower and go to bed. I paid for one night at a place, and it left me just a little more than $35.00. I woke around noon, checked out, and went sightseeing, ending up in a downtown casino. Whereby, I went through $25.00 with no luck on my side. In three short hours, I had gone through two-thirds of all I had. I walked to my car, which was parked in the sun. Of course, coming from Chicago, I had the windows up and no way for the air to get out. I had a lot on my mind, wondering what I was going to do next, where could I get more money, wondering what was going on at home, since this was the first time I had thought of my family since leaving three days before. I got in the car, closed the door, and just sat there with the windows up; the heat got to me so fast I didn't know that I had passed out. The next thing I remember was a police officer pulling me out of the car, and hearing an ambulance coming up the street. I kept saying that I was all right, but he said that I had to go to the hospital (another expense I did not need). I told the doctors I didn't have any money, couldn't afford it, but they said the county would pay their bill. The ambulance ride cost $34.00 and wasn't covered. I got back to my car around 10 that night, had about $7.00 to my name, so drove north out to the desert, pulled off the road, and sleeping in the car again.



"Next morning I stopped in a gas station and after cleaning up in the rest room got a city map, as I wanted to know where the ambulance company was. I had decided I would just go and be honest, telling the owner I would work it off, had no money. I went into the office and told him my problem and that I would wash his ambulances, or anything else he wanted to pay the bill. He said that he liked my honesty and wondered if I would want a steady job. I told him I would, but had no place to stay. He said I could grab one of the bunks in the ambulance room. I agreed and had a job.

"The first day off I got, I found my cousin's name in the phone book and went looking for her. The third time I went to her house, I happened to pull up just as she was just going into her driveway. She was surprised to see me and asked me in. She talked honest and frank about her business in front of the maid and her little girl. She talked about the money, $200 a trick, and wondered if I was offended by what she was doing. I told her, hell it was her body and I guess she could do what she wanted. She had a new home, new Cadillac convertible, a maid full time, and she would get up at noon and have breakfast. It was a new enlightenment to me, so open about sexual conversation, as if nothing was wrong with anything. She worshipped the child and wanted the best of everything for her, and by the way she was living was doing all right. I would meet many of her friends, and she said that she would fix me up with any of them I wanted, meaning sexually, but I turned her down. I told her I would find my own. I felt funny doing that with her knowing.

"After working nearly two months, I was told that I would have to get a work card, since the ambulance company had city contracts. In order to get a work card in Las Vegas you have to be 21, I was not. The owner said that he thought he had a job for me at a mortuary, being their night man and picking up remains from the hospital and sometimes from the homes.

"Again I was able to live right there. The room where I stayed was known as the call room, right next to the embalming room. During May the mortuary had 86 funerals and over two months I was pall-bearer for some 75, never knowing the person or family."

Gacy told me that he grew homesick and went back to Illinois in the beginning of July. Other accounts say that one night in the mortuary he climbed into a coffin containing the body of a boy whose manner of death had left him with an erection, and arranged the body on top of him. He grew frightened and jumped out and, the next day, called his mother and asked if she thought that his father would allow him to come home.

In Chicago, Gacy took classes at a business college. Then he got a job as a shoe salesman. The company he worked for sent him to Springfield, Illinois, to superintend the sale of its shoes in a department store. He traded shoes for clothes with salesmen who came into the store. "The Jockey man would come in and get a pair of $40 shoes at cost," Gacy wrote in a letter he gave me a copy of. "I would get a dozen briefs and Jockey T-shirts, sometimes more. It was the same with shirts, nothing but the best. Manhattan french cuff white shirts, some silk, some the finest cotton Van Heusen shirts the same way—shoes for shirts. . . . You talk about men's jewelry, hell again I had the best of Swank cuff links, tie pins. I had a collection of stones of the world in cuff links. I liked large flashy cuff links, as women would always remark about my dress. Psychologically, I got recognition from the customers, always remarking about my cuff links, or ties, and never the same. I enjoyed the attention . . . and it made a good impression on the customer, not only would they know I was the manager, but just by looking at me, you knew I had to be the boss. . . . I dressed and looked like an owner or a millionaire even when I was young. . . . I never wore brown because a man from Hart Shaffner and Marx said I didn't look good in brown. . . . I liked rich dark blues, blacks, burgundy, grays, olives; some wool but I stayed with shark skins and silks because of the richness."

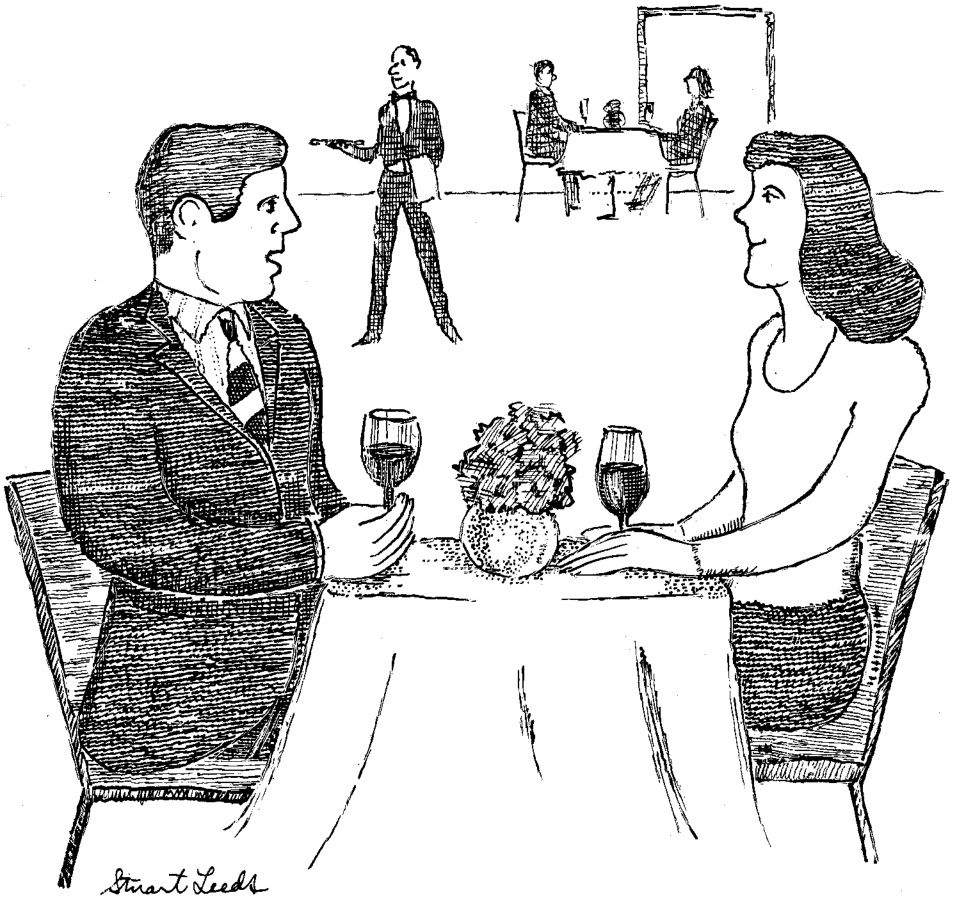
In Springfield, he lived with an aunt and uncle. He met Marlynn Myers, and they married in September of 1964. Around that time, he had his first homosexual experience. He was drinking at a friend's house and he passed out, and when he woke up the friend had Gacy's penis in his mouth. Gacy felt that he couldn't ask the man to stop, and, besides, he enjoyed it. For months, though, recalling the experience depressed him.

In February of 1971, eight months after Gacy was released from the reformatory, a boy in Chicago told the police that Gacy had picked him up and tried to force him to have sex. Gacy was arrested for assault. He said that the boy had been hitchhiking and had propositioned him and that he had thrown him out of the car. In any case, the boy did not show up to testify. The charges were dropped; the parole board in Iowa never learned of them.

While cooking at the restaurant, Gacy double-jobbed at painting and renovation, mostly for people who lived in his mother's building and occasionally for people he met at the restaurant's bar. He and his mother came up with a name for his sideline: P.D.M. Contractors, for Painting, Decorating, and Maintenance. He needed a place to store the lumber and paint cans and ladders he used, and his mother's apartment was too small. She sold the apartment, and she and John bought a house on West Summerdale Avenue, in Norwood Park, a suburb near the airport. They moved in during August of 1971.

The first boy Gacy killed was the boy he picked up at the Greyhound bus station during January of 1972 and brought back to the house. His mother was spending the night at her sister's. He made the boy a few drinks with grain alcohol. He and the boy went down on each other, then the two of them went to sleep, in separate rooms. Early in the morning, he woke and saw the boy in the doorway of his room with a kitchen knife in one hand. Gacy charged the boy. They wrestled. Gacy got control of the knife and stabbed him several times. For a while, the boy made a sound as though he had fluid in his windpipe. Gacy left the room and did not go back until the sound had stopped. He dumped the body into the crawl space through a trapdoor in the floor of his closet, and a few days later he buried the boy there. For years after Gacy's arrest, no one learned the boy's name. Whenever the police spoke of him, they referred to him as the Greyhound Bus Boy.

In July of 1972, Gacy married Carol Hoff. As a teen-ager, Carol had been a friend of Gacy's sister Karen and had often been at the Gacys' house. She and Gacy had gone on a date when she was sixteen. Carol felt that Gacy was like a brother. Toward the end of 1971, after Carol and her husband divorced, she often visited Gacy and his mother. Gacy was kind to her two daughters, and she liked listen-



"I send half my money to the I.R.S. and retain the other half for my records."

ing to him talk. When Gacy's mother heard that Carol was having trouble paying her rent, she suggested that Carol and her daughters move in with her and John. Before Carol and John were married, he told her about the trouble he had been in back in Iowa, and he also told her that he was bisexual, but she thought he was kidding. A few months before the wedding, Gacy's mother rented an apartment and moved out of the house.

Carol and John were married on the first of July. Nine days earlier, Gacy had been arrested again. Somehow, he must have kept her from knowing about it, or convinced her that it was a mistake and he was innocent. The police said he had told a boy that he was a deputy sheriff and ordered the boy into his car. He forced the boy to go down on him. Afterward, the boy jumped out of the car, and Gacy tried to run him over. For some reason, the charges were dropped.

Throughout the summer of 1972, Carol noticed a smell that seemed to come from something decaying in the crawl space. In a back room was a swarm of flies, which she thought might be feeding on whatever was down there—maybe dead mice. Gacy said the odor was the result of a runoff from a broken sewer pipe, and he spread lime in the crawl space to try and control it, but the odor got worse. Carol left on a trip, and when she got back Gacy told her that he had poured concrete over a section of the crawl space to get rid of the smell. The flies disappeared, but the smell remained, only fainter. Sometimes she saw Gacy drop into the crawl space carrying a fifty-pound bag of lime, to spread over the damp ground.

In the summer of 1973, Gacy took over the garage for his contracting business and told his wife and stepdaughters to stay out of it. He was often gone most of the night. When Carol asked where he had been, he said visiting stores and construction sites that he hoped to bid on, and talking to people about work he might do. Late at night, he said, he could see more places and have more conversations than he was able to during the day. Beneath the sink in the kitchen, Carol found some magazines featuring naked men. One of the pictures was of a young man who appeared to have blood on his body. She and John made love less and less often and finally not at all.

Early in 1975, Gacy's mother moved to Arkansas, to live with her daughter. During the summer, she broke her hip, and Carol went out there to help care for her. While she was away, Gacy strangled a boy who worked for him and buried him beneath the floor of his garage. In October, Carol told John that she wanted a divorce. They lived together, though, until the following February. Gacy had continued to pick up boys and pay them for sex, but he did not kill any of them until April. By the end of 1976, he had killed six more.

Around this time, Gacy began performing at hospitals and parades and store openings as Pogo, a clown. Pogo had a white face, bat-shaped red lips, and wide blue eyes in the shape of beehives. "I took up the name Pogo," Gacy wrote in the account he gave me, "and the reason was based on, one, that I was Polish, so that's where the Po, for Poles, and since I was on the go all the time, I took go and added it to it."

In 1977, Gacy was briefly engaged. His fiancée moved into his house in April. They argued often, though, and after a few months he told her he was leaving for

THE WATER CLOCK

Thinking of aging, on a summer day
of rain and more rain,
I took a book down from a shelf
and stopped to read
and found myself—
how did it happen?—
reflecting on
the absurd creation of the water clock.
Drops collected
on the bell-tongues of fuchsia
outside my window.
Apple trees
dripped. I read about
the clepsydra: invention of an ancient world,
which reconciled
element to argument
before the alphabet
had crossed the Hellespont.
Water dripped
from above
and turned a wheel,
which was about to turn
a dial when I looked up and saw
the rain had stopped.
How could they have? I thought.
Taken an element, that is,
which swallowed faces, stars, irises, Narcissus.
And posed as frost, ice, snow.
And had a feel for
the theatre
and catastrophe of floods. And,
in an August thunderstorm,
could bring the moon to heel.
And reduced it
to this? And the sun came out and
the afternoon cleared.
And in half an hour—
maybe even less—
every trace of rain had disappeared.

—Eavan Boland

a week on business and wanted her gone by the time he got back.

In January of 1978, a nineteen-year-old boy told the police in Cook County that he had been walking a little after midnight when Gacy pulled his car to the curb in front of him. Gacy pointed a gun at him and said he was a cop, and told him to get into the car. Then he handcuffed him. At his house, Gacy raped the boy. He held a gun in front of his face and, spinning the chambers as if he were playing Russian roulette, pulled the trigger a number of times before a blank cartridge fired. He caused the boy to lose consciousness several times by choking him and by holding his head under water in the bathtub. The boy said that he had been in such pain that he begged to be killed. In the morning, Gacy drove him to work. Gacy told the policeman who arrested him—for kidnapping and deviate sexual assault—that he had picked up the boy and made a deal for sadomasochistic sex. He implied that the boy had gone to the police because he had not paid him. The assistant State's Attorney decided that in court Gacy would appear more believable than the boy, and the charges were dropped.

In May, a civil warrant was issued for Gacy. A twenty-six-year-old man said that Gacy had offered him a ride to a bar. As he was driving, Gacy suddenly covered the man's face with a rag soaked in chloroform, and the man passed out. He said that Gacy took him home and tortured and raped him for several hours, while he drifted in and out of consciousness. He woke the next morning at the base of a statue in a park near where he'd been picked up. His pants were unzipped, his rectum was bleeding, and his face was burned from the chloroform. In the hospital, he learned that the anesthetic had worked severe damage on his liver. The man identified Gacy's picture among a collection the police showed him, but the police didn't pursue a charge. Gacy settled with the man for three thousand dollars.

No one testified that they had ever seen Gacy with any of the boys he was about to kill. Since most of their bodies were under his house, no one could be sure what had happened to them. On the few occasions when a parent reported to the police that his son was missing, and said that the boy had a job with a contractor named Gacy, the police would visit the Summerdale house, and Gacy would shrug and say that he would do anything he could to help but he hadn't seen the kid for several weeks. Runaways are what the police assumed they were dealing with. Gacy was finally caught when he killed a boy who had told someone that he was on his way to see Gacy about a job. This was on the evening of December 11, 1978. When the boy didn't come home—it was his mother's birthday, and the family had planned a party—the police turned their attention to Gacy. Eventually, they got a warrant to search his house. While one of the policemen was using the bathroom, the hot-air furnace forced air from the crawl space through the room's heating vent. A day or so later, it was borne in on the policeman that the smell was the same as the one he recalled from the morgue.

Of the thirty-three boys Gacy is convicted of killing, only twenty-four were identified. The names of some became known from dental records brought to the police by parents who had heard about the excavation and thought that their son who was missing might have crossed paths with Gacy. The nine boys who were unidentified were buried in various cemeteries under headstones with the inscription "We Are Remembered."

In June of 1978, Gacy was found to be syphilitic. Not long before, he'd had the idea that he would fill in the crawl space completely with concrete, and that he and Carol could get back together and leave Chicago for a small town where he could open a fried-chicken franchise. One night, a few days after his arrest, he wrote a letter to his mother and family that began, "Please forgive me for what I am about to tell you. I have been very sick for a long time."

At night, I would take Gacy's manuscript to the Park-Et Restaurant, in Perryville, and sit in a booth and drink coffee and eat pie and read. Here is the first of two entries concerning his childhood:

"Background incident, age 5, John W. Gacy, sexual bewilderment, 1947.

"Back then, in the summer, after dad was off to work, and mother had things in order at the house she would visit some of the neighborhood woman friends with children. Anyway, this particular time we had all went down to another family's house which was in the next block south on Opal. We would usually stay for lunch, and get back home by 3 pm.

"The family's kids were all older than the three of us, and except for two which were our age. From what I could remember several of their children were slow learners, and one was mental retarded, so she stayed close to home. While the rest of the kids were either playing or taking a nap after lunch, this older girl said that she would watch over me and we went upstairs. She was mentally retarded, and 15 at the time. While playing house in one of the bedrooms she took off all my clothes and was fondling me and tickling me, me being too young to know what was going on. Downstairs, both their mother and Mom thought that the kids were too quiet and went to investigate, and starting to account for them. When they came upstairs, walked into the room where we were, they saw her playing with my ding a ling. And their mother while yelling came in and grabbed the girl, and hit her several times, while yelling about what she was up to. My mother came over to me, asked me what I was doing with my clothes off or something to that nature, and got me dressed and took me downstairs. I was scared, as I thought that I would get hit too. I was told not to be taking my clothes off with girls and to sit down there by them until they left. I had told them that the girl said it was all right for her to take my clothes off.

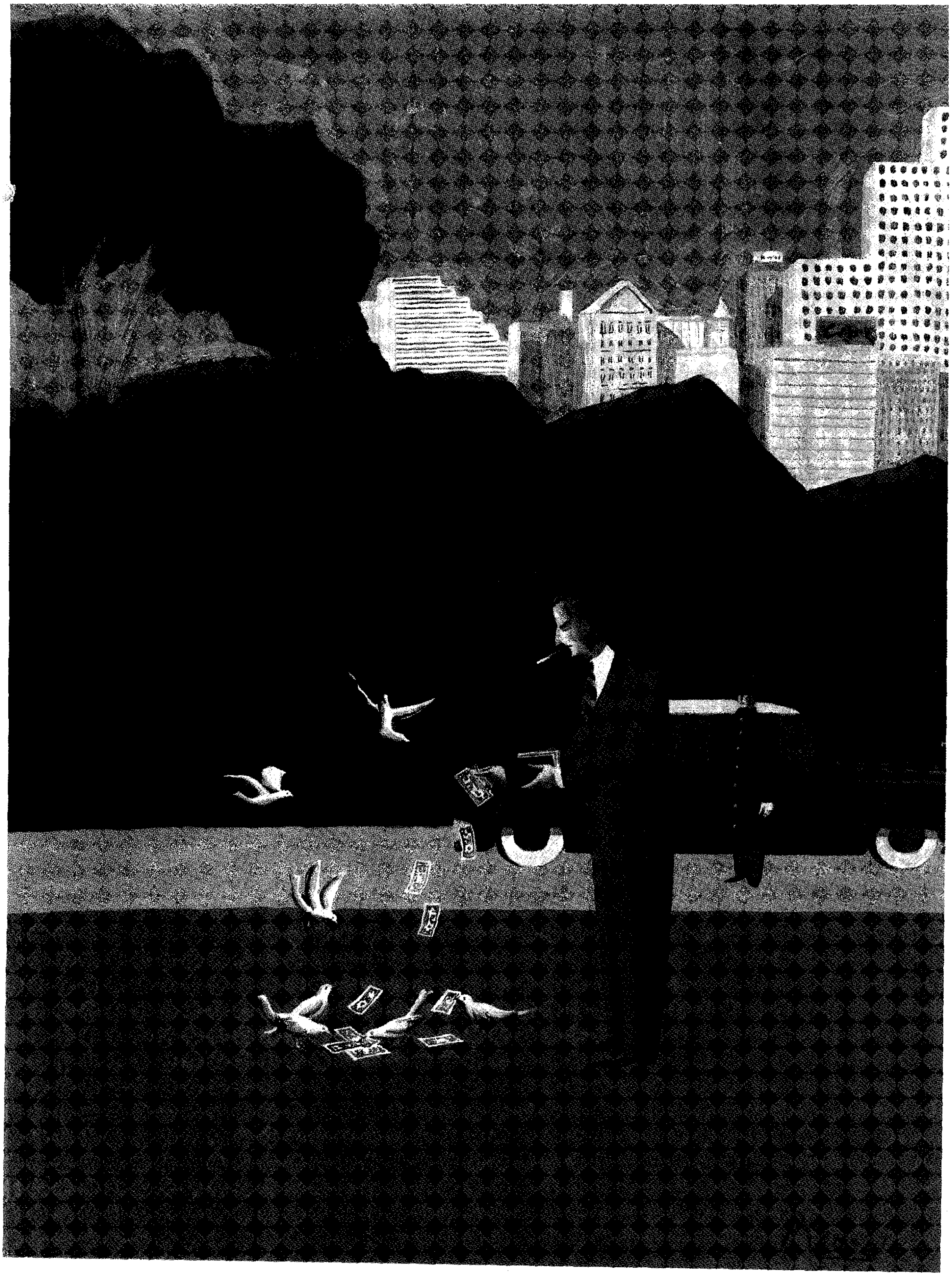
"While I never did understand what we were doing that was so wrong at the time, it left a profound feeling on me in my thinking about taking off clothes in front of others, even my sisters, thinking that I was going to get hit for doing it. As at the time I was told that what we were doing was dirty and wrong. I think now all it was was curiosity, me not knowing, and her for her age, even being retarded."

The second entry reads:

"1950, age 8, Sexual incident with contractor.

"In the late spring of 1950, we lived at 3536 North Opal, in Chicago, Ill., at that time there was an empty lot next door on the right. And word was that a new house was to be built. After the foundation was poured, a contractor came around and was looking at the lot, since it was a Saturday my dad was in the yard trimming hedges. The contractor spoke with my dad and one thing led to another and dad offered

PIGEON FEED



"It's for a young woman in the generation that knows how to read but doesn't feel like it."

• •

him a beer, and they sat in our yard and talked. Mother came out so he met her too. I was playing in the yard, and was interested in the conversation about building. Several weeks passed, and the contractor was back to see how progress was going on his building (weekday). He seen me in the yard as we kids were home for spring vacation. He asked me if I would like to go and see some other building sites, and have some ice cream. I asked mom and she said it was alright. (I must add at the first visit with my parents, they talked about wrestling on TV.) I went with the man in his car and after the second stop, he asked me if I had seen last week's wrestling show, I said yes, and then he said that he wanted to show me a new hold in the car. He moved out from behind the steering wheel, closer to me, and told me to bend down and put my head under his leg, which I did, he held me between his legs for several minutes, tightly so that I could not move, and in fact I had tears in my eyes. When he seen that, he let me go, and said let's go get that ice cream I told you about. After that I returned home, never mentioning anything about it. Couple weeks went by, he came back, seen me and asked if I would like to go again with him to get ice cream, again went. After several stops he was talking about wrestling, and again he wants to show me a new hold, so we did it again in the car, only it was the same hold, with a little more grabbing of me between the legs. Ice cream again and I was dropped off at the house. After a fourth time of the same thing each time when I seen him coming down the street, I ran and hid from him. Later mother in the yard told me that the contractor was looking for me. I told her I didn't like that man, and didn't want to go with him. She said he wanted to take me for ice cream for watching over his building. I told her I didn't care. When my dad came home that night, mom told him what happen, and dad came to me and asked me about it. I told him what was happening each time, and he told me that he didn't want me going with him no more. The next time he came around on a Saturday, my dad was home, I stayed in the house. Dad went over and talked with him, and from what I can understand from hearsay, Dad told this man to stay away from me or he would call the police. With that he was around a few more times to see his building finished, but never came near our house again. That's all that happen, but I have never forgotten it from the age of 8 1/2. I still remember the man wasn't too tall, middle aged, semi bald, dark heavy glasses, with a mustache, a little over weight, two door car, light blue, I think it was a new Chevy, it was newer than my dad's, as in 1950 he had a 46 Chevrolet four door."

GACY and I would meet in the prison in a room that was small and had no windows. Against one wall were a table with a Formica top and three chairs. On the other side of the wall was death row. To arrive at the room, I would first take off my shoes and my coat and pass them across a counter to a guard, who put them in an X-ray machine. I asked him if anything interesting had ever appeared on the screen, and he said not really, but that he was hoping to find a cat to examine. Nothing can be taken into the prison except twenty-five dollars, to buy food from the vending machines in the visitors' lounge, so I would empty my pockets of everything. Then I would be patted down, and then I would walk through a metal detector. The metal detector was sensitive enough so that one morning it registered the metal in the buttons on the fly of my bluejeans; to get into the prison that day, I had to drive to the Dollar Store in Chester, and sit around in the parking lot waiting for it to open, then buy a pair of sweatpants. Sometimes other visitors arrived at the same time I did, and we were signed in and searched and taken into the prison together. One day, I went in with a short, heavy woman making a sympathy call on behalf of a local church. The next time, I went in with a tall, thin man wearing glasses. While we were waiting for a door to be unlocked, I asked if he had a ministry of some kind. "I know the Lord," he said, "but I don't have a ministry." He asked if I knew the Lord, and I said, "Not as well as you appear to," and he said, "Yeah, I guess I should be more humble."

That day, Gacy said, "I go to bed and say three Hail Marys and the Our Father. I dream about the life I used to have. I dream about being in construction. I dreamt one night that my daughter was getting married and of all the things that I would do for her. For a while, I would tape newspaper pictures of the victims to the wall beside my bed and go to sleep seeing if I would dream about them or if I could recall if I ever met them. I would look at them and say, 'Who the hell are you, and how did you die?' I don't have fantasy-type dreams, and I don't ever have nightmares.

"I arrived here March 14, 1980, nine-fifteen in the evening, with a five-car caravan and a helicopter overhead. (You can move your chair over here, I won't bite you.) State car in front, I'm in a van, and then there's another state car behind me. Both cars had Thompson machine guns. I didn't see them—this is from what I was told, maybe to scare me. Behind us was two troopers' cars, and the whole caravan doing seventy-five down Interstate 55 from Chicago. Instead of pulling into the prison where I thought they would, they turn off the lights and go down this gravel road. And I'm thinking, Oh, no, they're going to kill me now. But they brought me around to the back of the prison. They couldn't bring me in the front, because there was a whole stack of reporters. And there were a whole bunch down at the main prison, too, because they were waiting for me there, also.

"I'm the first man to arrive on death row at Menard. I opened the place up. There was nobody else here. Now there's sixty-one of us, twelve on my cell block—three black and nine white. At the time, there was nineteen men on death row in Stateville, the other prison in Illinois where they have executions. The State decided that the first guy who got the death penalty after the beginning of the year in 1980 they were going to send here, and that was me. When they brought me down here, the press came out with how I was scared to be with the prison population, so they put me here by myself. Like the State was going to be concerned with my feelings.

"I was greeted by the warden and the assistant warden, who's a big monster dude. They walked me up to the third floor and marched me down the tier to the last cell. Not a sound in the place except what the chains on my feet were making. Everyone had white shirts. I didn't even *see* any gray shirts until the second week. Everyone had white shirts, because they were all lieutenants. I was supposed to be superhuman—I was supposed to be some kind of monster—so they gave me all lieutenants.

"The first thing one of them did was bring me two ham sandwiches, an apple, and a pitcher of orange juice, because I had been on the road all day and hadn't had anything to eat.

"They assigned a guard to watch me, because I'm the only one here. Every fifteen minutes, he has to write down what I'm doing—Gacy's on the toilet, Gacy's lying down, Gacy's pacing the floor, talking to an officer, Warden So-and-So was here. Every time somebody came near the cell, he had to make a note. How'd you like to have that job? Some people would just come by and look at me. They wouldn't say that—they'd pretend they were giving a tour or had to check on something—but there's only nine other cells and they were empty, and I'm in the tenth one down at the end of the hallway, and they walk all the way down there, what the hell you think they were looking for? They wanted to see what Gacy looked like. Three times a week, they'd put handcuffs on me and walk me down to the shower with a towel around my waist.

"Prison life has been the doldrums, same goddam thing day after day. You can have a cell six and a half by seven and a half, which has a window, so you can see the barges going up and down the river,

"The euonymus likes partial shade and does equally well under Republican and Democratic Administrations."

but you only get let out an hour a day, or you can have a cell eight by nine, with no window, and you are let out only three days a week but three hours at a time. I have one of the larger cells, so no window. I don't know if it's night or day. I can't tell you if it's raining. Being in prison is like being in Las Vegas, where you're gambling and you don't know what's going on outside. I was a workaholic outside anyway, so time meant nothing to me then, either.

"I go to bed late—two-thirty, three o'clock, four. I get up at five and look at the food they're serving for breakfast—who the hell wants to eat at five in the morning? I don't sleep much. I like to make my time work for me. I don't believe in that macho thing of lifting weights and getting all muscular—I've got strong legs and a tight ass, and I carry all my weight on my chest and in front of me. When I get out of my cell, I go to the rec room and play cards. Otherwise, I answer my mail. Personally, if I was on the outside I'd *never* write someone in prison. I've had people send me paintings of clowns, figurines of devils, T-shirts—all declined. You're not allowed to receive anything except books, but no novels on homosexuality, bestiality, or incest. They say it stimulates you. They allow photo books like *Penthouse* and *Playboy*, they show lesbian films on the late-night in-house channel—two women getting it on, that's not supposed to incite you. The other stuff, I guess they think it might incite you to attack guards. We're not on the farm down here, so I can't understand where the bestiality comes in.

"When I first walked in here, I was scared to death. I didn't know how to think like a con: it wasn't part of my nature, and I still can't do it. I didn't realize men could be bitches. Women sit at home and gossip, but in prison I've learned that as soon as you walk away they'll talk about you. Everybody who doesn't say a word when you're standing there will put in his two cents when you're gone. They get bigger balls when you're not around.

"If somebody threatens you, that's not the guy you have to worry about, because he's warning you—it's the rattlesnake theory. The guy who's dangerous is the one who asks about some small thing he heard you told someone, and you say you don't know what he means, and he says, 'You're lying to me, you're making me look like a fool.' Now you're in trouble. People say the worst weapon in prison is a homemade shank. That's not the worst weapon in prison. You know what the worst weapon is in prison? A pen. Or a regular No. 2 lead pencil. You got one of those, you hear someone's got a visit, you arrange to have a visitor at the same time. We could be friendly, he could have his arm around my shoulder, we're talking, and he jabs me in the eye and says, 'That's for stealing my pack of cigarettes two months ago.' The other day, we were playing cards during rec time. One of the guys at the table got up to get something. A few days before, another guy had overheard him make some remark about him in the cells. He came up now and said, 'What you say about me, motherfucker?' and beat him and slapped him around and kicked him until he felt he had had enough, and meanwhile another guy just sat down at his place at the card table and everyone looked out the window. Then somebody said, 'Your deal.' When the guards asked the guy who had got beat what had happened, he said he slipped on a wet place on the floor. Even if someone came in now and stabbed you while we're talking, even if the security camera above us showed me looking straight at you, no way I would ever say I saw anything. 'I don't know, it all happened so fast, I didn't see nothing,' I'd say.

"Down in the Pit, the main part of the prison, you're on tiers, and, even though you're assigned a cell and don't come out, it's gang territory. They'll take everything you got, and when you're out of everything they'll say you got to pay them rent. They know you have money, because they know what you have on account at the commissary. And even if you're in for just, say, car theft—a year and a half, simple—they'll rape you, do all *kinds* of things to degrade you, and you might think you'll fight off one guy, but how you going to fight off three or four? They'll have you giving blow jobs up one side of the tier and down the other. You've only got a year and a half to serve, but you're not going to let yourself get killed over something like that—you have to put up with it. Sooner or later, you'll have to give it up. When I got here, my attorneys said it would take three years for an appeal, and I said, 'I don't know if I can take it.' "

GACY insists that he never confessed to the murders. He has written an account of his trial, called "A Question of Doubt," which has been privately published. In it he says that there are two sides to every story. He describes himself as "the thirty-fourth victim." After he finished "A Question of Doubt," he wrote a manuscript called "A Questionable Case and Conviction," which contains his answers to a hundred and forty-seven questions. Toward the beginning of the manuscript he writes:

> The following is some of the many unanswered questions with answers as factually as I know them.
>
> But first to be fair, I will give you the states version of the case which is mostly their theories.
>
> According to the state over a six year period 1972-78, John Wayne Gacy stalked the streets of Chicago and suburbs, and kidnapped at gun point or manipulated young men and boys to come to the Summerdale house. Some on the pretexts of a job. According to the state, once there they were tricked into handcuffs, forced to have sex, beaten and tortured, then all killed by ligature strangulation and buried (27) under the house, or in the crawlspace, two others found on the property, and four additional were found in the Des Plaines river. According to the state, John Wayne Gacy went back to running his construction business during the same years, working seven days a week, 12-14 hours a day.
>
> The State wants you to believe this fantasy theory based on their scenario and that the motive was for sex and that they were killed so that they could not tell anyone or blackmail me and that I confessed to the whole crime.
>
> 1. PEOPLE SAY THAT YOU CONFESSED TO THE CRIME THEN LATER RECANTED IT?
>
> J.W: That is what has been said in the media and trial. Yet to this day nobody has produced one. There is NO written confession, no tape recorded confession, NO police stenographer typed confession, and no video taped confession.

It is true that there is no copy of Gacy's confession. The State's Attorney decided that he would not have the confession taken down by a court reporter; doing so might have offered Gacy the opportunity to put on record aspects of the murders which he might call on in his defense. Also, the police were afraid that Gacy might become uneasy at the sight of a tape recorder or someone taking notes, and stop talking. His confession exists only in the form of accounts the officers wrote afterward of what they heard Gacy say.

"The free-range chicken with little shoes by Reebok."

A signal document of Gacy's claim of innocence is the Victims Book, a collection of newspaper stories, interviews, photographs, and legal papers. A few years ago, Gacy began exchanging letters with a man, who has asked me not to use his name, because he is still gathering information and doesn't want to alert the people who are the subject of his interest; I will call him Chris Lewis. Gacy wrote Lewis that he didn't know who had murdered thirty-two of the boys he had been convicted of killing, nor did he know who most of the boys were or where they had come from.

"I wanted to know who the hell these guys were," Gacy says, "because, keep it in mind, at the trial they were all Boy Scouts and altar boys, and I was the monster that came along and swatted them like flies. Jesus, I didn't even want to run into myself the way they described me.

"My idea is, if I didn't kill them, and I had no knowledge of them, then who did they know? If I didn't do the murders, then we have to find out who did them by finding out about the victims and cross-referencing them. Did any of them know each other? If you can't find the who, what, and why, where are you going to go with it?"

Every time Lewis found the name of a relative of one of the victims, or someone who knew one of them, he wrote to the person or called him. When he learned of a place where one of the boys had worked, or a club where he was known, he went and took a photograph of it. The information he has collected he put between the covers of a folder, and then gave a copy of the folder to Gacy. It is now larger than the Manhattan telephone book. On the cover are the words

VICTIMS
RESEARCH
CONFIDENTIAL

The Victims Book has thirty-three sections, one for each victim; the victims are numbered according to the order in which their bodies were discovered. When Gacy leafs through the book, he refers to the victims as "Boy No. 12" or as "Victim No. 26" or as "Body No. 7." He never refers to the victims by name.

Each section begins with a photograph of the boy. In some cases, the photograph portrays the reconstruction that the police made of the victim's face from the structure of his skull. Beneath the picture is a description of how he was killed and where his body was found. In at least one case, there is an autopsy report. Then there is a description of what Lewis has been able to learn about the boy's past. He has included photographs and excerpts from the high-school yearbooks of some of the victims. One entry includes the names of pets that the boy's family owned. There is a color photograph of the house or apartment building where a victim lived, and in many cases there are color photographs of the graves. "We know where they lived," Gacy said, "and we know where they are now." There are newspaper pictures of the parents of some of the boys, and in one case there's a story about how the murder of their son caused a couple's marriage to dissolve. A hand-drawn design in the form of a red spoked wheel on the first page of a boy's report means that Gacy was out of town on the day the authorities selected as the approximate one on which the murder took place.

The Victims Book includes charts labelled "Victims Calendar Breakdown." The charts record the days of the week on which the boys disappeared. They are compared with days when Gacy was out of town. When Gacy explained the charts to me, he began speaking of himself in the third person. "Gacy went out of town," he said. "When did Gacy leave? Gacy generally went out of town on a Sunday."

When some of the families found out that Gacy was collecting information about them, they were indignant.

One day, Gacy placed the book between us on the table. When I asked if I could look at it, a smile crossed his face and he said, "If you're so interested, maybe we'll have to save this for later." He started to put the book aside, but then he gave it to me. "This isn't a toy," he said as I opened it. "This is years of solid research, chasing down leads. Everybody wants this. I'm not leaving it to anybody. I'm giving it to my sister with instructions to destroy it."

He went on, "People ask what would I do if I got free, and I tell them I'm still obsessed with this case. They say, 'What the hell, why do you care what happened to them?' and I say, 'Because I want to know what happened as much as anyone else. If I don't get justice, then how will the victims?' "

When I had read some of the entries, Gacy said, "How can a guy who is family-oriented kill somebody, anyway? There's no motive here. I figured if I was going to be put to death for killing somebody I'd like to know something about them, thus we did the research. God damn, if you're going to kill me, let me know what it's for. Even if I didn't kill somebody, I want to know what the hell happened. If I'm going to kill somebody, why did I kill them? The *why*, the *when*, and the *how*. What happened on Summerdale? Right now, we don't know what happened on Summerdale."

In assembling the book, Chris Lewis turned up a coincidence that Gacy believes proves he is innocent. Gacy mainly suspects two young men who worked for him, David Cram and Michael Rossi, of killing the boys and burying their bodies under his house. Cram and Rossi were questioned by the police when Gacy was arrested, but the police found no reason to believe that they had taken part in Gacy's crimes. In 1977, Cram and Rossi had asked Gacy to hire a friend, a young man I'll call Tom Peters. (Lewis asked me not to use his real name.) Peters had an alliance with a man I will call Lester Tompkins, who operated a business that supplied boys to older men. Lewis says that Tompkins is now in prison in Colorado for molesting a child. Gacy says that the boys were killed because they were members of Tompkins' prostitution ring and wanted to quit, or had become involved in drug deals that soured. He says that movies were made of some of their murders. It does not seem to occur to him that Peters was hired after a number of the boys had already been killed.

BEFORE I met Gacy, I exchanged a couple of letters with him. He asked me to fill out a form he had drawn up. The form had "Bio Review" written at the top of the page, and underneath were questions asking where did I live and was I married, did I have brothers and sisters, and what kind of car did I drive. Then there were questions such as "Childhood Hero," "Most Treasured Honor," "Favorite Song," "Favorite Singers," "Perfect Woman or Man," "Nobody Knows I'm . . . ," "I View Myself As . . . ," "Friends Like Me Because . . . ," "If I Were an Animal I'd Be . . . ," "Behind My Back They Say. . . ," "I Consider Myself (Conservative, Moderate, Liberal)," and "Thoughts on Sex."

He mailed me a copy of his answers:

> Perfect Woman: Independent, thinker, self-starter, mind of her own. . . .
>
> I View Myself As: A positive thinker, self-starter, open minded, nonjudgmental.
>
> My Biggest Fear: Dying before I have a chance to clear my name with truth.
>
> If I Were an Animal I'd Be: A bear or an eagle.
>
> My Biggest Regret: Being so trusting and gullible, taken advantage of.
>
> Favorite Song: "Send in the Clowns," "Amazing Grace."
>
> I Consider Myself: Liberal, with values.
>
> Thoughts on Sex: Liberal, whatever the will of consenting adult people who are in control of their own well being, and lives.

In the prison, on the first day, he had my answers in front of him. I had written that I considered myself liberal.

"How liberal?" he asked.

I assumed he was asking about my political views, but I wasn't sure. I said, "What do you mean?"

"Any homosexual experience?" he asked. "None as a child? No fondling? You have any brothers? Three? Nothing there? No masturbation? No circle jerking? What about when you were in school? Gym class? Anything in the showers? You ever see other boys naked? I didn't. I never took gym classes, because of my health, so I never saw boys naked. No ever thinking about men when you masturbate? *Nothing*? You never get hit on? What did you say when that happened? You never took anyone up on it? *Never*? Not even once? Damn, I hate these handcuffs; I'm used to talking with my hands. I've been married twice, engaged two other times, and shacked up a few times, but they always try to portray me as homosexual. I'm bisexual. I never turned down a chance to take part in a threesome, and I never passed up the opportunity to get a blow job, but no man has ever got anything from me above the waist. So why do they call me a homosexual? I think sex is overrated. My mother told me about sex, my father never did. She said try to make it an act of love and never force yourself on anyone. And I never have."

ANOTHER day: "I was stabbed on February 12, 1983," Gacy said. "By Henry Brisbon, the I-57 killer. He killed a number of couples on the interstate—shoot the man and take the woman into the woods and rape her, then shoot her, too—then he killed another inmate, so they gave him the death sentence.

"Henry was going to the law library with two or three other guys, and he got out of his cuffs. You used to be able to take a pop-top from a soda can and file it down so it fit into the keyhole of the cuffs. He was on the first floor and he pushed the guards out of the way and went running up to the third floor and down the tier and stabbed this inmate he had a grudge with. He had taken the bar off a typewriter that holds the paper in place and sharpened it. Then he took a swipe at the officer on the tier. I was on the second floor, picking up trash, for my work. Henry came down the stairs and ran into three officers and he said, 'You can move, or get stabbed, your choice'—Henry's a bodybuilder—and they backed away, so he came running toward me through the tier. He and I had just been talking about betting on a football game fifteen minutes before. He pushed me up against the wall, and when he did he hit me on my arm with the shank. Then he ran over to one of his buddies and said, 'Get rid of this.' They never did find the weapon. Meanwhile, I was kind of sliding down the wall, because I was off balance, and one of the other inmates standing there said, 'John, you're bleeding.'

"The newspapers made it up like it was something between me and Henry, him making some kind of statement about my case. Within two months after, though, him and me were talking. He said, 'You know, John, I never meant to stab you.' I was an afterthought. But it taught me never to trust these guys.

"Last time I seen Henry was 1988. I don't know what they did with him, if he's dead or still in prison. They took him somewhere else, I know that."

Gacy turned then to look at a black man in leg irons and handcuffs being led past the door of our room.

"That looks like Henry now," he said.

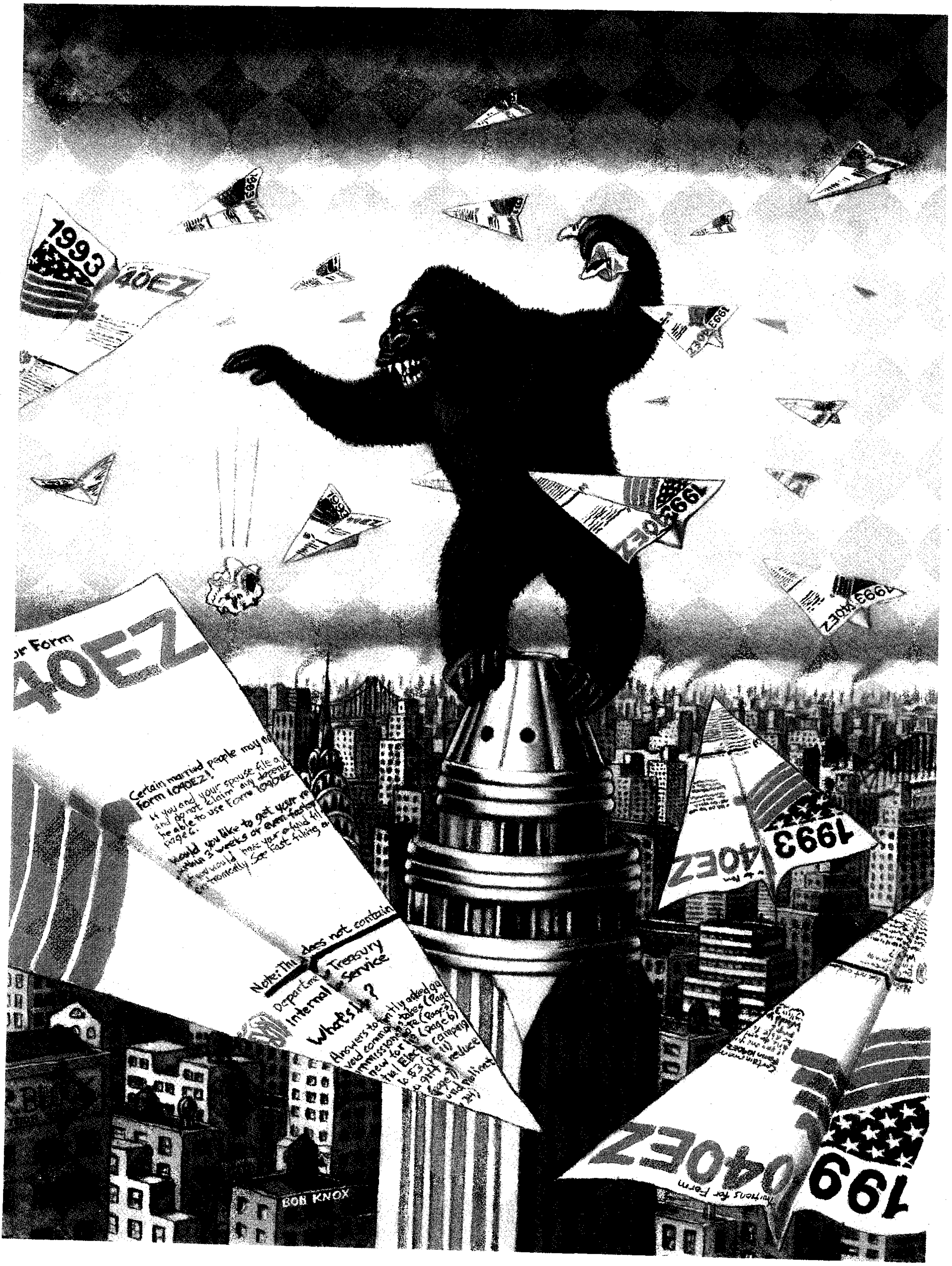
"Bring me some of those prison cigarettes," the man said to a guard. (One of the industries at Menard is making cigarettes sold in the prison.) "I don't want no menthol, now. I want the kind with the red label. Hurry up."

"That *is* Henry," Gacy said.

He looked down at the table and shook his head. Then he raised his voice and said, "Henry, where you been?"

"I was up north enjoying myself,"

TAXING DAY


1993
40EZ
or Form
40EZ
Certain married people may
Form 1040EZ!
Would you like to get your
Note: This does not contain
Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
What's up?
1993
40EZ
199
040EZ
Instructions for Form
BOB KNOX

he said. "Pontiac. Till I wore out my welcome."

A guard unlocked a storeroom in the hallway and gave Brisbon several packs of cigarettes. Brisbon went and sat in a room across the hall with his visitor, a big white man in a coat and tie. Gacy started talking again. When I turned to see if Brisbon was still in his chair, Gacy said, "Are you worried about him? I got your back covered."

I said I wasn't worried. I didn't say that it was slim comfort to hear Gacy say he had my back covered.

"He'd kill you anyway," Gacy said. "Even when he's friendly with me, like now, I still remember 'You stabbed me for no reason.' "

THE next day, Gacy said, "I've been thinking about your answers to the Bio Review. They bothered me. You never had *any* homosexual experience? Nothing at all? Kinsey says that eighty per cent of all men have had some kind of homosexual experience. The way you look, you know, and me in here for what I am, the guards are thinking you're a homosexual. If I was to lean over and lick your ear, or put my cuffs around you, they'd be in here fast to kick me out."

"What difference would it make if you *were* a homosexual?" I asked. "No one cares about that kind of thing anymore."

"It wouldn't be fair to the victims," he said.

I asked what he meant.

"It would portray them as sexual," he said, "and that wouldn't be fair to their reputations."

I asked about his father.

"My dad has been butchered," he said. "The media made an image out of him like he was an alcoholic monster. O.K., my dad drank, and he was Jekyll and Hyde when he drank. If he came up from the basement and said the walls were pink, you said the walls were pink, but you learned to stay away from him and keep your mouth shut at the dinner table."

I said that, as far as I could tell, the description of his father as crude and menacing seemed accurate.

"This is my first pair of Levi's," he said. "When I grew up, my father always said that corduroys and khakis were the proper way for a man to dress. If you were wearing jeans, you were making sexual gestures. I went to school in flannel shirts and corduroy pants. But I never hated my father. He was a strong man, an immigrant born in Poland. He married my mother when he was forty-one. We didn't get along. I thought I could never please him, but I still love him. If we went fishing, though, like we did for a week every summer, and I rocked the boat, or my line got tangled, or it happened to rain, Jesus, it was all my fault."

His father, I said, struck me as a coward and a bully, a drunk who beat his wife and terrorized his children.

"I learned values from my father," Gacy said.

I said that you could learn values from a book. Gacy said that it pleased him that flagstones he had hauled on his bicycle were still in place in the yard at the house where he lived with his parents, and that a tree he had planted still stood, whereas nothing was left that his father had done. "My way to remember my dad is not to be like him," he said. "That's my way of getting back at the son of a bitch."

SOME days when I was driving to and from the prison, I would hear on the radio a country song with a refrain that made me think of Gacy. It went:

> That's my story,
> That's my story.
> I ain't got a witness, and I can't prove it,
> But that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Gacy told me more than once that he couldn't have buried any of the bodies in the crawl space, because his heart was weak and he weighed too much to maneuver in such a close space, especially with a corpse.

"It was thirty-eight inches in the crawl space," he said one day. "That's about how much room there is under this table." He got on his knees. "Then don't forget the floor joists." To demonstrate the amount of room they took up, he held a piece of paper against the edge of the table. "Right now, I weigh two-thirty; when I was arrested, I was from between two-thirty to two-thirty-five. If you look at where the edge of that paper is to the floor, can you imagine me bringing a body down there, in that little space, with my bulk, and being agile with it?"

"You're forgetting one thing, John," I said.

"What's that?"

WAITING TO GO ON

When I hear the five-minute call
for Orchestra and Beginners
I take my chair upstairs
and sit in the wings in my underpants,
my trousers over one arm.
I'm not in the first scene,
but I don't trust the Tannoy anymore
after what happened the other night.
"If you're not coming on, Mr. Williams,
that's all right with me,
but for God's sake don't come on late."

They let the first Walking Gentleman go
after only one warning,
just for lying down between the acts.
They didn't bother auditioning the part,
they recast the suit
and I happened to have short arms.
It's cold sitting here night after night
with nothing over my knees,
but the suit belongs to the Company
and I don't want to be fined
for having poor creases.

—HUGO WILLIAMS

"You did it once before, when you buried the first body." He stood up.

"Very true statement," he said, without resentment. "But you're going back six years earlier. You're talking about 1972, and what was my weight then? A hundred and seventy-six pounds. So it's not a contradiction."

I didn't mean to argue with Gacy, but I didn't seem able not to. When I asked about the confession he gave at the police station, he said that he remembered nothing about talking with the police on the night he was arrested or on the days after. "I was arrested on December 21st," he said, "and I took a hundred and thirty milligrams of Valium, and I woke up on December 26th wondering why I was tied to the bed." Another time, he surprised me by saying, "I remember them asking me the night I was arrested, 'Are you a night person or a day person?' Simple question. What would you answer?"

"Night person."

"Well, how would you feel if they said then, 'Do you always stalk the streets at night?' That's what they said to me."

"You're describing moments of your interrogation," I said. "You can't have it both ways. Either you remember nothing or you recall confessing."

"You're getting semantical with me about the words."

"What do you mean?"

"I read it in the court transcripts."

One day, he said something that remained in my mind. He had been talking about how he couldn't have murdered anyone, because he was nonviolent, a coward, someone who would walk away from a fight. Furthermore, he said, he had had all the sex he needed, so there was no reason for him to have sex with the boys he was said to have killed.

"Why would I want to kill these boys, anyway?" he said then. "I'm not their father."

The next day, when I asked what being the boys' father had to do with murdering them, Gacy didn't say anything. He just looked at me. Then he said, "I didn't say that."

"You did, John."

"I didn't say it."

"I wrote it down."

"We covered so many things," he said. "I don't know if I said it or not." Then, "If I said it, I was saying it because I feel like a father to these boys."

"Even so, fathers don't kill their sons."

Another pause. Then he said, "I wasn't afraid of anything in the basement of the Summerdale house. If I was afraid of something, how come when the basement flooded three times I called the plumber in there? How come I would have had boys digging drainage trenches for me down there?" Gacy had once had Rossi and Cram dig trenches in the crawl space—for drainage, he told them. The prosecution said they were graves. "If I was afraid of being caught, don't you think I wouldn't have wanted anybody down there?"

"What if I said you had Rossi and Cram dig trenches in the basement so they'd find the bodies?"

"Why would I want to do that?"

"Because then the nightmare would be over."

"What nightmare?"

"The killing. Finally, it would stop. The part of you that was horrified by what had been going on could then find some kind of peace."

For a moment, he said nothing. Then he said, "I'd like to know what we were talking about yesterday." Then, "I didn't believe in the State's theory of the case, but the more we started studying the victims, the more I started feeling like a father. Just like what I do with people I write letters to. I feel like a father to them. What am I always doing—you've read some of my letters—I'm always giving them advice." Then he closed a folder he had opened on the table. The folder, he said, had more information to prove his innocence. "I think you've got your mind made up," he said, with a sudden sharpness, "and I don't think you want to see where we're coming from."

I was going to say that that wasn't true, but a guard in the hallway called, "Gacy," and John got up and went to see what he wanted. When he came back, a few minutes later, we talked instead about Robert Piest, the last boy he killed.

"The State tried to assemble this case against me," he said. "They tried to say, 'You were in the store, Piest was in the store.' "

Piest worked at a drugstore. Gacy had stopped in to see one of the owners about some renovations. He told the police after he was arrested that he had spoken to Piest in the store about a job. As he was pulling away from the curb in front of the

FEED
YOUR FACE
FORMERLY
Chez Lemmuel

"Looks like the tide's beginning to turn."

Pet Shop
SMOKING
NONSMOKING
VICTOR

store, he said, Piest ran up to his car and asked about work. Gacy told him to get into the car and took him to his house. Piest was the boy Gacy had been strangling when the telephone rang.

"All right, I'll give you all of that," Gacy went on, "but you show me one person who puts me in the car with Piest. That saw him coming to my house."

I said that it didn't really matter whether someone actually saw the boy in his car. The boy's jacket and a receipt that someone who worked in the store had put in one of the jacket's pockets were found in his house.

"That's the State's story," he said. "But you show me one person who says they saw me with Piest."

"Forget the State's story, John. Let's say Robert Piest took a taxi to your house, he hitchhiked to your house, he walked to your house, a guy in a helicopter gave him a ride to your house, and no one saw him do it. It doesn't make any difference how he got to your house—that's irrelevant. That's not part of the story, don't you see? He was in your house, that's all that counts. He was in your house the night he died, and no one ever saw him anywhere else again."

Gacy said nothing for a moment, then, "Michael Rossi brought him there."

"You're telling me that by chance, out of all of Chicago, Michael Rossi, your employee, happened into *that* drugstore at *that* moment and met the same boy you are convicted of killing and brought him to your house and *he's* the one who killed him?"

"Rossi got his prescriptions there."

"So?"

"Don't you think that's strange? He didn't live anywhere near there, but he still went to that drugstore to get his prescriptions. We found this out."

"So what?"

"We were going to meet there to talk about a job," Gacy said. "We had jobs on opposite ends of the city, and the drugstore was halfway in between, so we decided to meet there."

"Did you ever tell Rossi that you had buried a body under your house?"

"No."

"Then you mean to say that there happened to be a house in Chicago—well, actually, let's say anywhere in the world—where two different people were burying bodies, neither of them aware of the other doing the same thing?"

"I know I didn't put those bodies there. In my heart, as God is my witness, I never killed anyone."

"Two different people?"

"Yeah."

I started laughing. "That's crazy, John. That's the craziest thing I ever heard. That's a lunatic idea. Do you understand the probability of something like that happening?"

"It was the perfect place for him and Cram to bury them."

"What are you talking about?"

"It wasn't their house. They weren't going to get caught."

"That's ridiculous. They wouldn't bury bodies there, because they couldn't have any control over who might find them, they didn't control who came and went from your house."

"If anybody found those bodies, who's going to get blamed?" he said. "Me."

"It makes much more sense that you would do it."

"I told Rossi I buried the bodies there."

"*What?*"

"I got drunk one night and told him, and that's how they were able to do this—he had this holding over me. People say, 'Why didn't you fire the guy?' and I say, 'I couldn't, because he knew about that first body.' "

I gave him a skeptical look.

"How come the body I buried is under concrete and the others are not?" he said. "It breaks the pattern."

I thought of saying that this was absurd. Then I realized that it wouldn't make any difference. He would have a reply.

"Talking to you is like talking to a wall," I said. "You never actually answer a question."

"I answer."

"You're being disingenuous."

"What's that mean?"

"Not straightforward."

"Just because these things fit, it don't mean that I'm the one that fits them together," he said. "Because I own the house, I have to take responsibility, sure, but how the hell am I supposed to know what's going on there when I'm in fourteen other states? The police found that receipt from Piest's jacket in my trash. Michael Rossi probably went through his pockets to rob him and found the receipt and threw it in the garbage. I had nothing to steal from him. I made seventy grand that year. I didn't kill the kid. What do I have to do, give a pound of blood to prove it?"

I made no reply.

"It looks bad for me, I know," he said. "I'm not trying to simplify it. But I'm not their father, why do I have to be responsible for them? If I've left you confused, then that's the way it's got to be, but we are going to continue to look at all the avenues."

"Tell me something," I said.

"Yes?"

"What do you think of the people who committed these murders?"

"I can't even begin to fathom how they thought," he said. "Even to try to think of how they could do something like this is completely foreign to me."

LEAVING the prison that day, I said to the guard who walked me to the gate, "May I ask you a question?"

He nodded.

"Do all of them swear that they were somewhere else?"

"I never heard one of them yet say that they done it," he said.

"They all say they want to know as bad as anyone else who's responsible?"

"Yup."

On the river, a tug was pushing a line of barges against the wind.

"Tell you what," the guard said. "I believe he don't even know himself he did it."

"Same with the others?"

"Yes, sir." He took a cigarette from his pocket and spit on the ground and said, "I believe it's a *syn*drome."

ON the next-to-last day that I saw Gacy, he said, "If I was to confess to you, you know, they could make you a witness against me, if I ever got a new trial."

MOST people feel that Gacy should die. Even people who feel ambivalent about the death penalty often feel that the kinds of ambiguities and complexities that give them pause are absent in Gacy's case. Or they simply relax their concerns when Gacy is the subject. He is sometimes cynically referred to as the poster boy for the death penalty.

Gacy is an outcast, a lonely and isolated man who has had experiences unlike those of a civilized person. He has failed again and again to restrain homicidal impulses that might occur to other people but that they manage to stifle or defuse. He has caused profound suffering and harm and sadness. He lives with the knowledge of having done something horrible by refusing to live with it. He is like someone who inhabits a parallel world, which is unreality. At his trial, his lawyer defended him by entering a plea of insanity. Psychiatrists who examined Gacy for the defense were prevented by legal maneuvering from describing the afflictions and disturbances he suffers. In the reports that the psychiatrists wrote of their interviews with him, they most often described him as a paranoid schizophrenic, but the prosecution portrayed him as a man who ran a profitable business; if he was insane on the thirty-three occasions when he murdered, the prosecution said, then it was a convenient form of insanity.

Gacy resents any suggestion of psychiatric complications in his personality, and he especially resents being described as insane. The more firmly he can maintain an impression of sanity, the more firmly he can dismiss the suggestion that he is a killer. He never endorsed the plea his lawyer entered for him, and he particularly didn't care for it when he learned that it contained an admission of guilt. Gacy's case strikes him as uncomplicated. He is not guilty. He wasn't there. He has been too trusting. Other people have taken advantage of him. What the doctors say about him has no meaning for him. "I'm like a chess game they played," he says. "Thirteen of them, and they couldn't come to an agreement about me."

I WENT one afternoon to a printshop in Perryville to have a copy made of the manuscript Gacy had given me. The young man working there saw Gacy's letterhead, which says, "Execute Justice . . . Not People."

"You should have talked to my dad," he said. "He died a few months ago, but I guess he knew Gacy as well as anyone. He was thirty years a guard at the prison, the last fifteen of them on death row a lot of the time."

I asked if his father had ever talked about Gacy.

"My dad would say how much it cost to keep him there," he said, "and he thought maybe him and the other guards should have just left his cell door open and turned their backs for fifteen

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EMERGENCE

From how many distances am I to arrive
again and find I am standing on the bare outcrop
at the top of the ridge by the corner of the ancient wall
with the sloe thickets the sheep tracks the gray ruins
oak woods abrupt hollows and the burials of the upland
rolling away behind me farther than I can say
and before me the path down through rocks and wild thyme
into the village its tiled roofs washed out with sunlight
its trees glinting in the faded day and beyond them
the valley blue and indelible as a vein
sometimes it is spring with the white blossoms opening
their moments of light along the thin naked branches
sometimes snow has quilted the barns the houses the small fields
the waves of moss on the walls but always it is autumn
with the rest inside it like skies seen in water
the days of summer folded into the stones and I have come
not to live there once more nor to stay nor to touch
nor to understand arriving from farther and farther
from tones of alien cities from the breathing
of traffic from sleepless continents from the eye of water
from flying at altitudes at which nothing
can survive and from the darkness and from afterward

—W. S. MERWIN

minutes. Save everyone a lot of money."

I asked Gacy one day what he believed the end might be like. He said that he never thought about it. He was on a "positive mental kick," he said, and he refused to consider anything negative. Then he said that people often ask if he's scared, and he tells them he'll start worrying when the needle is put in his arm—he is to die by lethal injection—because then he'll know that the State is serious.

"If I'd been a hell-raiser—if I'd killed a guard or another inmate, or if I was a threat to the world outside—I could see it," he said. "But what is to be gained by killing me, except revenge? There's not a thing I can do about it, though. If I get off somehow, I get sent down to the Pit to do the rest of my time, and I don't want natural life in that animal kingdom."

Another time, he said, "I'll tell you what—I'm not going to make no damn Ted Bundy last-minute confessions. None of that shit. I'm not going to put my family through the media circus. And I'm not going to be buried with my mother and father, like some people have written, because I don't want no one desecrating their graves.

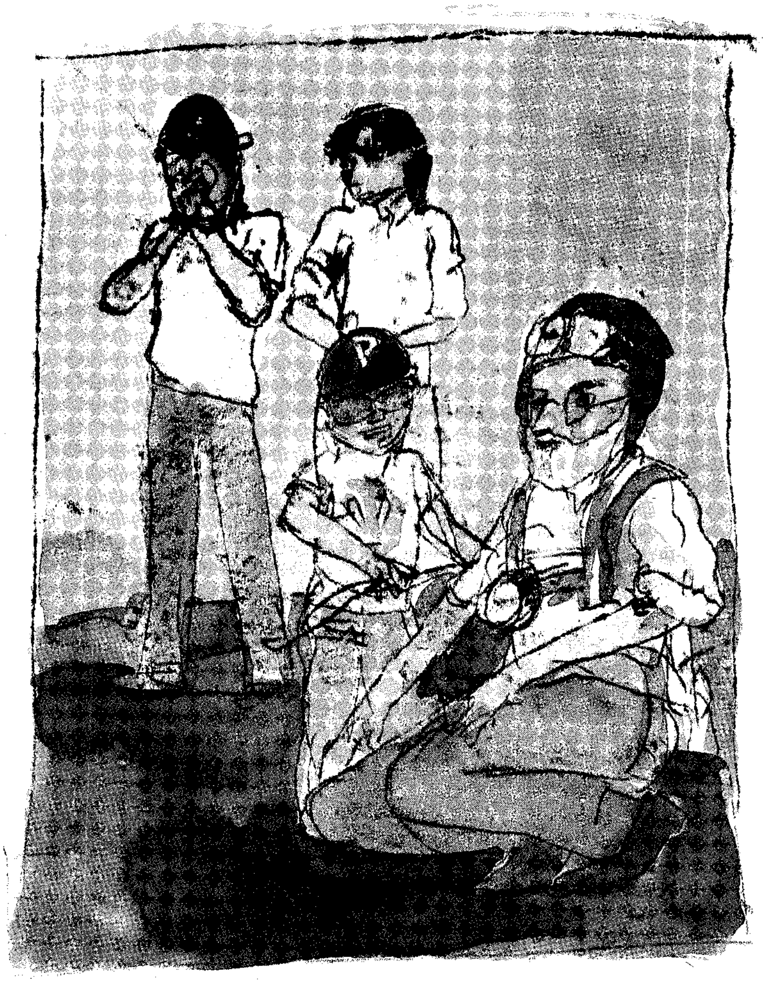
"The prison won't let me have my family there—I hear the victims' families can come, but I can't have my own family. I don't know. And I'm not going to invite anyone else, either. I got all these people that tell me they want to be there, and they say, 'I've known you for eight years, you've got to let me come,' but I spent my life as a workaholic and a loner and I'll go out that way, too."

A few weeks before I began visiting Gacy, my wife gave birth to our first child, a boy. The last time I saw Gacy, he asked how my son was doing. "When he's about a year old, get him a turtle," he said. "Put the turtle down on the floor, and he'll chase it and that's how he'll learn to crawl—it'll make him crawl faster—but you have to watch out, because if you don't get there in time he'll put the turtle in his mouth. That's what we did with my son, and we think it made him walk sooner."

I shook his hand and said goodbye. When I reached the end of the hallway, I turned and looked over my shoulder, expecting to see him. The hallway was empty; he had disappeared back into his obsession. ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE • BY ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

UP IN THE AIR



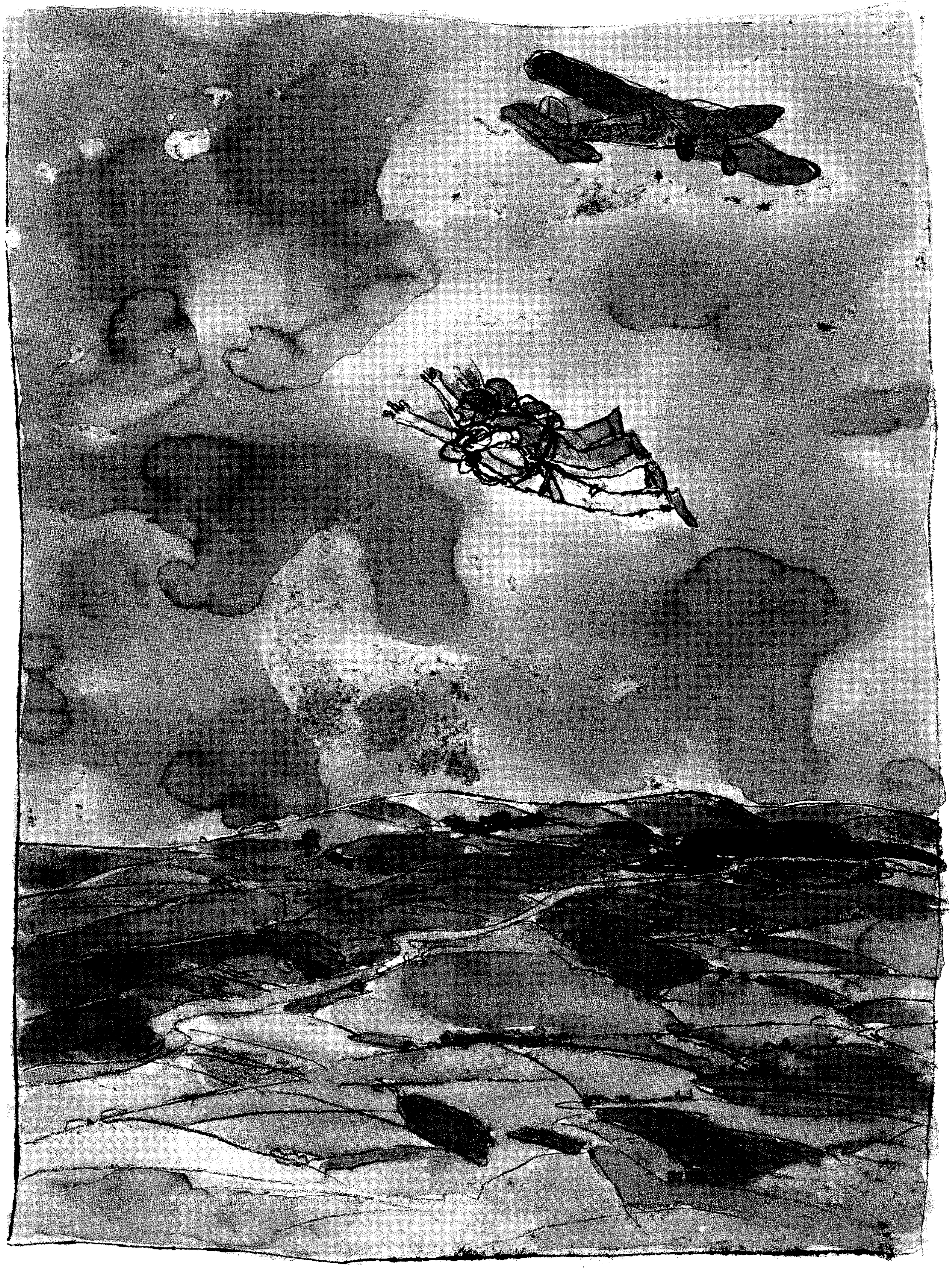
I'VE wanted to parachute ever since I was a boy. I sometimes dreamed about it, often speculated about it. In the Army Air Forces, I always hoped I would have to use my chute, but I never did.

My wife gave me a parachute jump for my sixty-fourth birthday. One summer morning, we drove to Ellington, Connecticut: my wife, my son, my grandson, and I. For three hours, I trained with eight other people, all very young; our instructor, Paul, was also quite young. On a weather-beaten wooden mock-up of a plane, we practiced stepping out onto a little step just over the wheel. Then I put on a helmet and a harness and an altimeter, and four of us—two experienced jumpers and Paul and I—crowded into a small plane and crouched behind the pilot's seat.

At forty-five hundred feet, the experienced jumpers got out. At sixty-five hundred feet, Paul yelled in my ear, "Are you ready to skydive?" He buckled his harness onto mine. We stepped out the door into space. The step on the plane was a lot smaller than the mock-up step. The wind was very strong. We let loose our feet, then our hands. The plane floated away above us, and I yelled, "Christ!"

After ten seconds of free-falling, we opened the chute, and then the landscape appeared between my feet: farms and roads and some yellow school buses. We maneuvered the chute, tacking like a sailboat, and aimed at the airport field. After three or four minutes, we landed very easily, softly. My grandson said, "Do you want to do it again, Bob?"

My son filmed the descent and later added music: Ellington playing Billy Strayhorn's "Upper Manhattan Medical Group." The film looks good, very professional. In it I am hyperventilating as I take off the harness and the helmet. My face is gray, and my tongue looks like a chow dog's. I was the first of the group to go up that day, because I knew I wouldn't like waiting around for my turn. The other jumpers were sitting at a picnic table. As I walked toward them, their expressions were mixed. ♦



FICTION

THE GENTLEMAN

BY MARTHA McPHEE

MOM learned to fall backward into the arms of strangers without hesitating or looking over her shoulder. She learned to fall freely, with her muscles relaxed and her mind open, inhaling the bitterness of sweat along with stale cigarette smoke, inhaling the thought of freedom, with her hands by her sides, her fingertips clutching the fabric of her dress, her reddened lips turned up in a smile. At first she was afraid to fall. She wanted to look behind. She bent at the waist and fell awkwardly, buckling at the knees. But eventually she succeeded and fell freely into waiting arms which received her, catching her under the armpits, catching her with fingertips pressing into the soft flesh of her breasts. A human pillar, she fell and fell and fell, until she fell in love with Anton. Anton was her therapist.

Mom had curly hair, golden curls the color of sand. She was thin, with a big bust and a gap between her teeth and green, green eyes. She wore shiny taffeta dresses with big flowers and no sleeves. Some had matching jackets, some had matching sweaters. The colors were living colors that made me think about summer: peach, lemon, strawberry. Her skin was ivory and smooth and there was no hair on her legs or under her arms. It was comforting skin, the type that showed no signs of stress—honest, sincere skin that wrapped her in an extra layer, protecting what was inside.

Mom did her falling with a group of other patients, in a barnlike old house, which she called "The Farm." Anton was an itinerant therapist of sorts who had come to our town to spread the Gestalt word and his idea of women's liberation. He started the local chapter of NOW and organized sit-ins in pubs that excluded women. But his specialty was lonely housewives. He taught them all to fall, and to him our mother fell.

We didn't meet Anton right away. We were on the outside, near the road, with a lemonade stand that Mom helped us set up so that we'd have something to do while we waited. We went there on Saturdays, arriving early, before the others. Mom left us with three crisp dollar bills and an old cigar case filled with shiny pennies and small bits of tobacco. The dollars were meant to appease us so that we wouldn't complain about bad business at the end of the morning, when she would emerge from Anton's with her face swollen with tears.

Daffodils and forsythia were in full bloom and the scent of the long oniongrass filled the air. A gentle mist lifted from the ground toward the sky and all around were trees. The house was gray and chipping paint, and it stood at the end of a short dirt driveway pocked with potholes. Ivy climbed up the walls, and the windowpanes were smoky with unpolished glass. One window was lit—a window on the second floor—by a blue light.

"He's a priest," Julia said. The words came from her mouth in a steam of warm breath. As she spoke her left eyebrow rose. Julia's hair curled like Mom's: small ringlets, sausages, that fell gently to just below her ears. Her dark-blue eyes gleamed. We stood by the lemonade stand, a little chilled, dressed alike in our yellow rain slickers and yellow boots, studying the blue light. A car rushed by on the road, blowing air over us. "A Jesuit priest."

I hadn't quite pictured him as a priest. A man dressed in a cope and cassock wasn't what came to mind when I tried to imagine Anton.

"He's not a priest anymore," Jane said. Her braids hung heavily, pulling her face long. The mist had left little beads of water glistening in her hair. "He's a Gestalt therapist now."

"*Deux trois*," Julia said, acting smart. She said she knew everything.

"Mom's falling in love with him," I said.

I didn't know what a Jesuit was then but I could tell by the way people looked when Mom told them he'd been a Jesuit that it was important. Awe seeped over their faces like a stain. I did the same with my face, pretending I understood. "Gestalt" was another one of those words that impressed people and that I didn't understand but used as if I did. I told teachers and classmates, anyone who'd listen, that he was a Jesuit and a Gestalt, and just using the words made me feel big.

"Gestalt therapist," Jane would correct.

We were serious, serious to the point of solemnity. The air was blue, wet and cold against my face, and suddenly I felt unusually clean. I thought of us as buttercups standing in the oniongrass in our yellow jackets and boots. We looked odd and out of place at the head of Anton's driveway. Odd because we were clean, as if there were something jarring and peculiar about being clean and being there. Everything about us was clean: behind our ears, the napes of our necks. We smelled of lemons and witch hazel, and our clothes smelled of bleach and starch. Our cotton bobby socks were clean, soft as feathers around our feet; our jumpers were clean; our shirts were clean; even the grosgrain ribbons tied around our hair were clean. I had the urge to run deep into the trees and roll around in the bitter and decaying leaves, and then I began to laugh. I pointed at the blue light. "Do you think they're fucking?" I said. Julia had taught me that word. I looked at Jane and Julia and they laughed. "Kaaate!" they said.

But we were bored. We laughed hard and loud, wheezing uncontrollably, and I worried that we would disturb Mom and Anton. Then I hoped that we would. I hoped that Anton would come to the window and tell us to be quiet, so that we could have a peek at him. I hoped he'd raise the window and rest his palms on the sill and call us each by name—Jane, Julia, Kate—and the sounds of our names would come to us with the warmth of his reprimanding words, making us want to obey him.

"He's a philosopher. And he's writing a book," Jane continued.

"He's got five children," Julia said.

"He's married," I blurted.

"Kate," they said. We weren't supposed to talk about that.

"He's a Texan and a poker player," Julia said. "And he's a big, big man with a big, big head." Her eyes widened and her nostrils flared. "And he's generous."

"And he likes to eat." Excitement flooded our voices.

"He earns over thirty thousand dollars a year playing cards," I said. I liked saying "cards" instead of "poker." It sounded more professional.

"How do you know that?" Julia snapped. She hated it when I knew something she didn't know.

But the image of Anton that I held and hoped for was the image of a distinguished man, tall and slender, with silver graying hair and long protective fingers, a gentle man.

THE familiar coughing of a muffler warned us and Jane yelled for us to run. We darted through thistles, deep into the forsythia. Surges of panic excited us, shooting up our spines. We thought we could vanish. We thought the color of our raincoats would fuse together with the wilting flowers and blend us into hiding. Thickets and rough branches surrounded us and the ground was soft and gushy and speckled with the greens, whites, and yellows of ragweed and fallen blossoms.

Jane parted several branches so that we could spy on the people arriving at the house. First came Delilah, Anton's secretary. She didn't look much like a secretary, in her miniskirt and stovepipe patent-leather boots. Her hair was long and tangled, and it wrapped around her shoulders like a shawl and danced with the leather tassels of her jacket. She parked between the Cadillac and our station wagon and vanished into the house, like Mom.

"She's a hippie," Julia said.

Then the rest of the people came. There was something strange about them, though they weren't that different from Mom. I guess it was because they were all so similar. Their hair was nicely brushed and curled, held back with bows or bandeaux, coiffed. They wore wraparound skirts or slacks, and bright Argyle sweaters with initials embroidered on the side. On their feet were rain boots or loafers, and their gait was determined, emphatic. One by one they drove in, parking hurriedly, and rushed from their cars to the door as if pulled by some mysterious force. They were housewives, some of them the mothers of our friends. Mom had told us not to sell them lemonade. She said it might make them self-conscious to know that we knew they were in therapy.

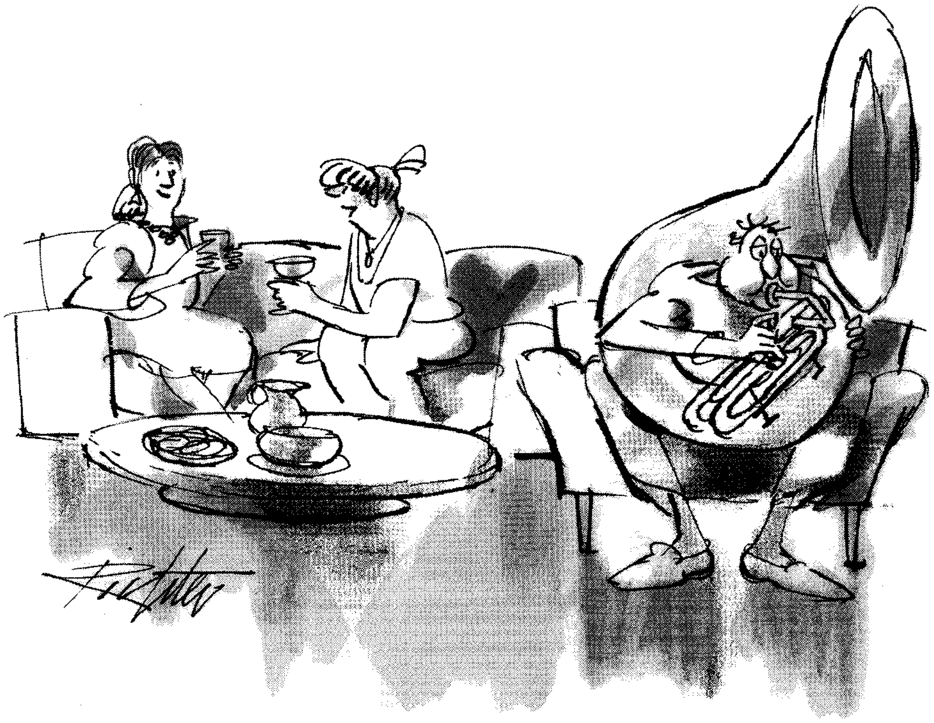
We watched until the last car came and the last person went inside the house. Then we emerged from the forsythia, coming into a new space that was somehow larger than before, filled with new things. A telephone pole shot into the sky, blossoming into a network of black wires that webbed their way in and out of the trees. Planks of wood leaned against the side of the house, disorganized and ugly. I imagined rusty nails in hidden spots and thought about tetanus and rabies and lockjaw. Jane had read about lockjaw. Lockjaw from rusty nails, lockjaw from stepping in animal excrement, lockjaw from licking our dirty fingers. She told us to be careful. She warned us that lockjaw was easy to contract at a farm. She told us that our jaws would convulse and our muscles would spasm and our mouths would lock shut permanently.

"A car's coming! A car's coming!" Julia sang, running across the road. The first car to stop for us all morning, in fact the first car ever to stop for our lemonade. Julia's smile was electric and her cheeks were rosy. Her curls stuck in wisps to her forehead. As the car approached, she waved her hands furiously. Even when she was clumsy, she moved with grace. She threw off her rain jacket and rolled up her sleeves. I followed her, but Jane, who was the oldest, stayed behind. She was above selling lemonade. She said the only reason she came along was to baby-sit us. Ever since Dad left, she had pretended she was our mother.

Not so long before, Julia had made me her best sister. "This is a secret pact," she had warned. "Can't tell anyone. Specially Jane." We were sitting on the bathroom counter with our feet in the sinks, washing them before bed. The fluorescent light buzzed overhead, making the bathroom incredibly bright. In the mirror our skin was ugly, betrayed by the light, pasty and pale.

"I won't tell Jane," I promised. Jane and Julia fought a lot and I swung between them like a pendulum. I liked swinging between them. For the most part I always had someone on my side.

"Jane's a bitch," Julia said. "I'm the one who always does special things for you." Then Julia stuck me with a sewing needle, quickly, in the fingertip, and then stuck herself. Small beads of blood popped from our skin and she clamped our fingers together, mixing the blood, and pressing them hard until they turned purple. When I thought it was all



"Cordell has switched to a more music, less talk format."

over, she put my finger in her mouth and hers in mine. "We can become so close," she said. "By drinking each other's blood we can become each other."

A BLACK Lincoln Continental approached. Dull and dirty. I stood on one side of the road and Julia on the other. The car slid quietly between us, as calmly as an ocean liner gliding through the sea. Julia disappeared and I heard the soft, mechanical murmur of an electric window going down. I waited.

"Kate! Kate!" Julia commanded suddenly, appearing at the front end of the car. "Get a cup of lemonade. This gentleman wants a cup of lemonade. He'll pay us twenty cents for a cup!" She looked at me from across the hood. "And he's gonna pay us to do him a favor. Get him a cup!" Her smile grew big.

She snatched the lemonade from my hand and passed it into the car. Her arm vanished for a second and then reappeared with her fist clutching a dollar bill. I wanted to look in the car but she wouldn't move from the window. Hog, I thought.

"Look, Katy." She held the dollar up proudly. "He wants us to watch him change. He needs to fix his car and wants us to make sure that nobody peeks at him while he's changing into his old clothes." She spoke so fast, with assurance.

"Where do we have to go?" I said, suspiciously. I wasn't going into any woods with this man. Mom warned us about men that raped and killed. "Raped and killed": she said it a thousand times so we'd be careful. But Julia was older and knew everything. I watched the dollar in Julia's fist, wondering how much he'd pay us, hoping it would be more than just a dollar, thinking I'd bargain with him if he didn't offer more.

"Nowhere. Just here," she said. Then she grabbed my arm and pulled me near her, and together we leaned through the car window. She held my hand. I felt warm and special.

It was dark inside the car. A thick dust lay on the dashboard, broken with smudges and fingerprints. In several places stuffing poked from rips in the seat. The radio was turned on, and music struggled through static. Stacks of browned newspapers littered the back seat and plastic-foam coffee cups spilled from paper bags lying on the floor. I imagined there would be a lot of coins in that car.

The gentleman was oldish and the skin on his face was pulled taut, as if he'd been in the sun too much. He had very little hair, a halo of white fringe, and a large freckled bald spot. From his nose dangled something disgusting that I couldn't make out, and I thought I should tell him about it.

"This is my best sister. She's my very best sister and we are true blood sisters," Julia said, speaking as if she had found something great like a piece of blue sea glass on the beach. I knew I should feel privileged that she was including me.

"You have something coming out of your nose," I said.

"Kate!" Julia snapped. "Kate" really sounded a lot like "hate" when she said it that way. "She's just young," Julia apologized. I hated it when she said I was "just young." I didn't feel very young. I was eight.

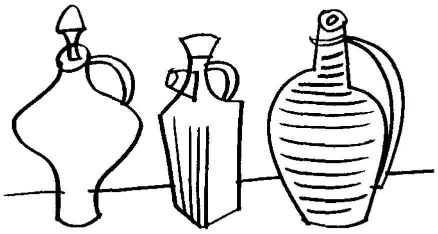
"Uh-huh," the gentleman said, staring at me. The whites of his eyes were yellow and filmy. I thought he'd wipe his nose, but he didn't. He just left the thing there, as if he liked having something hanging from his nose. I couldn't look at his nose. "That's a . . . real nice, really quite nice," he said.

There was a strange smell in the car: a smell of old milk and smoke.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, little missy. You're just as charming as your sister." He reached for my hand and kissed it on the knuckles. His lips were wet and his whiskers pricked my skin. I was afraid the thing would fall onto my hand, but it didn't.

"Now, uh, yes, I could use another cup of this lemonade." His words drew out long and he stumbled over some of them. "How 'bout gettin' me another cup of this lemonade? Yeah . . . why don't you, uh, run along?" His eyes caught hold of mine again and he handed me the cup.

"But aren't we going to help you? Don't you need to fix your car?" I asked.



The engine was still running and the car vibrated.

"When you return, pretty miss."

"Go on, Katy." Julia shoved me gently until I drew away from the car. I could imagine her saying, "You've gone and ruined everything and now I'll have to fix it." I was mad that I'd mentioned the nose.

I walked back across the road, leaving Julia with the gentleman. I wished I'd told him I thought it was snot coming from his nose. The only reason I didn't was because I was trying to be polite and the only other word for snot I could think of was "booger." My arms felt heavy swinging by my side—awkward and uncomfortable, as if I couldn't carry myself properly, and I was afraid that he'd be watching me. I could feel his eyes on my back and it made my legs twitch. Julia can get the gentleman a cup of lemonade, I thought. Julia can watch the gentleman change.

Jane picked forsythia, placing the boughs in her arms.

"Jane!" I yelled and she turned to me.

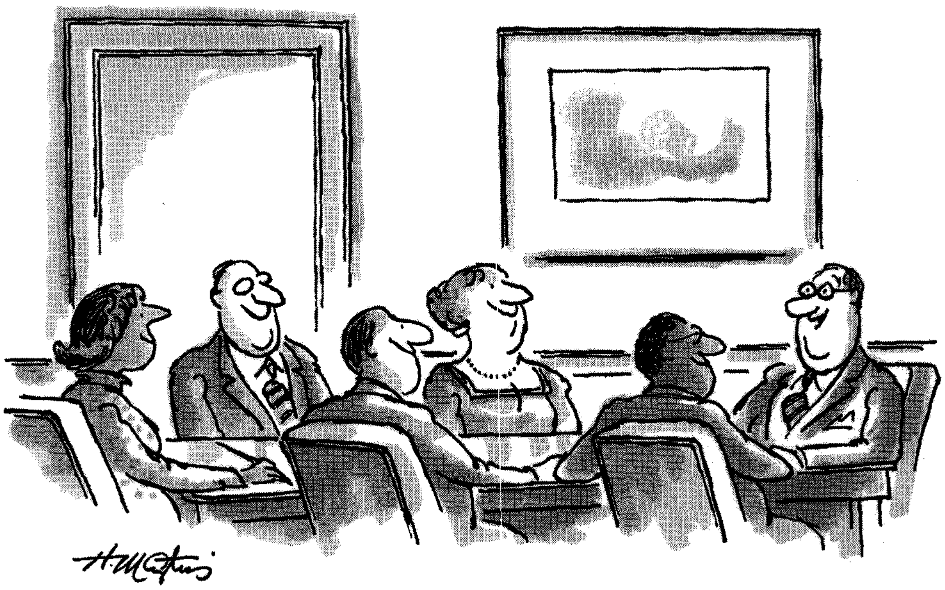
"What's wrong?" she asked, screwing up her eyes, confused. "Didn't you make a sale?" Her face was alert, ready to react.

"Julia's selfish," I said. That's what Mom said to us when we asked for too much.

"You're just figuring that out?" Jane said, relaxing. Her shoulders slumped forward. "I've been trying to tell you that for centuries."

I helped her pick forsythia, twisting the branches to break them off. They splintered into green and white flesh and I yanked and yanked. There was a difference between being with Julia and being with Jane. Jane was quiet and she didn't poke at me all the time and boss me around. Unless she was mad at you, she'd just let you be. Sometimes she'd speak and say something really smart, and you could tell she thought a lot. Nothing got by Jane. Sometimes I thought I'd rather be Julia and tried to be just like her. Other times it'd be Jane I imitated. Now I imitated Jane. I even put on her long face. But God, I wished I hadn't mentioned the nose.

Five, ten minutes passed. I looked at the car, feeling proud, glad to make Julia wait. It began to drizzle and the rain made sounds in the leaves. I practiced making long faces, stretching my mouth this way and that, raising my eyes.



"It's been moved and seconded that we fly the company plane to Zurich, split the bank accounts, and go our merry ways."

• •

"What are you doing with your face?"

"Nothing."

A car door slammed and wheels screeched, burning rubber, churning over pavement, and the Lincoln Continental vanished in a cloud of exhaust. We turned, knees trembling, afraid Julia would be gone. "Raped and killed" flashed across my mind. But she was standing where I had left her, frozen for a minute, with her hands in her hair. Slowly, she began to cross the road. Slowly, she leaned down for her ribbon, which lay on the road, and then she rose and erupted into tears.

Mom rushed from the house out onto the little front porch. She stood there for the instant it took Julia to run screaming from the road. Jane and I followed, stopping a little way back from the steps. Mom's taffeta dress was wrinkled at the waist and her lipstick was gone. Her arms opened for Julia and Julia collapsed into them. Mom's hand caressed the back of Julia's head. She looked past Julia's curls to Jane, slapping Jane with her eyes. Jane's face became long and she looked ugly. Her eyes became big and dense, taking over her face until it seemed she just had two enormous brown eyes. The rain plastered her hair to her skull. Even her braids hung awkwardly, like two fraying ropes. The flowers drooped in her arms.

"Eve! Eve, is everything all right?" said voices from the upstairs window and then three women's faces appeared up there. Their hair wasn't so neat anymore. Their ribbons and bandeaux were gone. They smiled, panicky smiles, and one of the women's teeth sparkled silvery with braces. Their bodies smushed together at the window and I stared, hoping I'd recognize one of the mothers so that I could make her feel uncomfortable, but I didn't.

"Don't worry," Mom called. She tilted her head up to them. "It'll be all right. Jane just wasn't watching the girls."

I wished I hadn't taken Jane's side. I was afraid I'd get the silent treatment, too, now, and Julia would be favored for days.

The screen door creaked open slowly and a man came out. Anton: as big as Julia had described him. Big round head. Big tall body. Big fingers. I thought about poker and the thirty thousand. Then I thought about God—I don't know why. Maybe because Julia had mentioned that he was a priest. I didn't know much about God. But watching Anton appear, I just thought about Him, and then the thought vanished and I felt spooked and smelled the stink of rotting toadstools that came from some old sycamores not far from the forsythia.

Anton squinted his eyes and a deep furrow ran across his brow, and he bent his knees to squat down next to Julia and Mom. I could hear his joints cracking. His hair was thin and graying. Thick sideburns striped his cheeks, and his shirt was an explosion of oranges, yellows, purples, and greens. The sleeves were pushed up to his elbows and he wore a pair of faded jeans that hung low on his hips.

"What's wrong, babe?" he asked. *What's wrong babe. Babe.* His words rushed through me. "Babe." Tender. He had a Southern accent that was somehow tough and strong yet protective. He bent down close to Julia and ran his fingers through her hair, patting her head. Her face was messy with tears and drool. Mom watched, pressing her thumbnail into her lip.

Anton's mouth touched Julia's ear and her crying stopped. His lips on her ear whispering into it. I felt as if his lips were touching my ear, wet and warm and soft, and I had that shivery feeling that a whisper sends through your entire body. All the way to your toes. Julia sank against him and he pulled her deeper into him. She was tiny in comparison. They whispered back and forth and I wished that I were her.

"It'll be all right," he said, rising. Anton loomed above us. His hand fanned out on top of Mom's head. On his ring finger there was an enormous turquoise ring. I thought of Julia's hand reaching inside the car. I thought of my hand with the whiskers pressing into it. I wanted to know what the gentleman had done. I wondered if he'd done something gross. I almost hoped he had, because I knew I'd hear about it in detail if he'd done something gross and if she learned something from it I knew she'd try to teach me. Anton noticed Jane and me. He winked. "It'll be all right," he repeated, a little louder, for us.

WE fell quickly to Anton, more quickly than Mom. We were limber, falling freely and our world opened up, suddenly becoming brighter. Mom wanted it that way, the four of us as one, falling, falling freely. Mom said Anton would love us, promised to God it would be the truth. And we fell and fell and fell, for the pure sensation of it, trusting until later. We were still young enough not to hesitate or question, not to look behind. ♦

PERSONAL HISTORY

IN THE KITCHEN

From a childhood view of a mother's home beauty parlor to adolescent dreams of a perfectly greased flat head, a history unfolds of the politics of the hairdo.

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

We always had a gas stove in the kitchen, in our house in Piedmont, West Virginia, where I grew up. Never electric, though using electric became fashionable in Piedmont in the sixties, like using Crest toothpaste rather than Colgate, or watching Huntley and Brinkley rather than Walter Cronkite. But not us: gas, Colgate, and good ole Walter Cronkite, come what may. We used gas partly out of loyalty to Big Mom, Mama's Mama, because she was mostly blind and still loved to cook, and could feel her way more easily with gas than with electric. But the most important thing about our gas-equipped kitchen was that Mama used to do hair there. The "hot comb" was a fine-toothed iron instrument with a long wooden handle and a pair of iron curlers that opened and closed like scissors. Mama would put it in the gas fire until it glowed. You could smell those prongs heating up.

I liked that smell. Not the smell so much, I guess, as what the smell meant for the shape of my day. There was an intimate warmth in the women's tones as they talked with my Mama, doing their hair. I knew what the women had been through to get their hair ready to be "done," because I would watch Mama do it to herself. How that kink could be transformed through grease and fire into that magnificent head of wavy hair was a miracle to me, and still is.

Mama would wash her hair over the sink, a towel wrapped around her shoulders, wearing just her slip and her white bra. (We had no shower—just a galvanized tub that we stored in the kitchen—until we moved down Rat Tail Road into Doc Wolverton's house, in 1954.) After she dried it, she would grease her scalp thoroughly with blue Bergamot hair grease, which came in a short, fat jar with a picture of a beautiful colored lady on it. It's important to grease your scalp real good, my Mama would explain, to keep from burning yourself. Of course, her hair would return to its natural kink almost as soon as the hot water and shampoo hit it. To me, it was another miracle how hair so "straight" would so quickly become kinky again the second it even approached some water.

My Mama had only a few "clients" whose heads she "did"—did, I think, because she enjoyed it, rather than for the few pennies it brought in. They would sit on one of our red plastic kitchen chairs, the kind with the shiny metal legs, and brace themselves for the process. Mama would stroke that red-hot iron—which by this time had been in the gas fire for half an hour or more—slowly but firmly through their hair, from scalp to strand's end. It made a scorching, crinkly sound, the hot iron did, as it burned its way through kink, leaving in its wake straight strands of hair, standing long and tall but drooping over at the ends, their shape like the top of a heavy willow tree. Slowly, steadily, Mama's hands would transform a round mound of Odetta kink into a darkened swamp of everglades. The Bergamot made the hair shiny; the heat of the hot iron gave it a brownish-red cast. Once all the hair was as straight as God allows kink to get, Mama would take the well-heated curling iron and twirl the straightened strands into more or less loosely wrapped curls. She claimed that she owed her skill as a hairdresser to the strength in her wrists, and as she worked her little finger would poke out, the way it did when she sipped tea. Mama was a southpaw, and wrote upside down and backward to produce the cleanest, roundest letters you've ever seen.

The "kitchen" she would all but remove from sight with a handheld pair of shears, bought just for this purpose. Now, the kitchen was the room in which we were sitting—the room where Mama did hair and washed clothes, and where we all took a bath in that galvanized tub. But the word has another meaning, and the kitchen that I'm speaking of is the very kinky bit of hair at the back of your head, where your neck meets your shirt collar. If there was ever a part of our African past that resisted assimilation, it was the kitchen. No matter how hot the iron, no matter how powerful the chemical, no matter how stringent the mashed-potatoes-and-lye formula of a man's "process," neither God nor woman nor Sammy Davis, Jr., could straighten the kitchen. The kitchen was permanent, irredeemable, irresistible kink. Unassimilably African. No matter what you did, no matter how hard you tried, you couldn't de-kink a person's kitchen. So you trimmed it off as best you could.

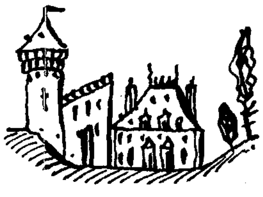
When hair had begun to "turn," as they'd say—to return to its natural kinky glory—it was the kitchen that turned first (the kitchen around the back, and nappy edges at the temples). When the kitchen started creeping up the back of the neck, it was time to get your hair done again.

Sometimes, after dark, a man would come to have his hair done. It was Mr. Charlie Carroll. He was very light-complected and had a ruddy nose—it made me think of Edmund Gwenn, who played Kris Kringle in "Miracle on 34th Street." At first, Mama did him after my brother, Rocky, and I had gone to sleep. It was only later that we found out that he had come to our house so Mama could iron his hair—not with a

CALEF BROWN

Bergamot
Jheri Curl
MURRAY'S
CALEF BROWN

hot comb or a curling iron but with our very own Proctor-Silex steam iron. For some reason I never understood, Mr. Charlie would conceal his Frederick Douglass-like mane under a big white Stetson hat. I never saw him take it off except when he came to our house, at night, to have his hair pressed. (Later, Daddy would tell us about Mr. Charlie's most prized piece of knowledge, something that the man would only confide after his hair had been pressed, as a token of intimacy. "Not many people know this," he'd say, in a tone of circumspection, "but George Washington was Abraham Lincoln's daddy." Nodding solemnly, he'd add the clincher: "A white man told me." Though he was in dead earnest, this became a humorous refrain around our house—"a white man told me"—which we used to punctuate especially preposterous assertions.)



My mother examined my daughters' kitchens whenever we went home to visit, in the early eighties. It became a game between us. I had told her not to do it, because I didn't like the politics it suggested—the notion of "good" and "bad" hair. "Good" hair was "straight," "bad" hair kinky. Even in the late sixties, at the height of Black Power, almost nobody could bring themselves to say "bad" for good and "good" for bad. People still said that hair like white people's hair was "good," even if they encapsulated it in a disclaimer, like "what we used to call 'good.' "

Maggie would be seated in her high chair, throwing food this way and that, and Mama would be cooing about how cute it all was, how I used to do just like Maggie was doing, and wondering whether her flinging her food with her left hand meant that she was going to be left-handed like Mama. When my daughter was just about covered with Chef Boyardee Spaghetti-O's, Mama would seize the opportunity: wiping her clean, she would tilt Maggie's head to one side and reach down the back of her neck. Sometimes Mama would even rub a curl between her fingers, just to make sure that her bifocals had not deceived her. Then she'd sigh with satisfaction and relief: No kink . . . yet. Mama! I'd shout, pretending to be angry. Every once in a while, if no one was looking, I'd peek, too.

I say "yet" because most black babies are born with soft, silken hair. But after a few months it begins to turn, as inevitably as do the seasons or the leaves on a tree. People once thought baby oil would stop it. They were wrong.

Everybody I knew as a child wanted to have good hair. You could be as ugly as homemade sin dipped in misery and still be thought attractive if you had good hair. "Jesus moss," the girls at Camp Lee, Virginia, had called Daddy's naturally "good" hair during the war. I know that he played that thick head of hair for all it was worth, too.

My own hair was "not a bad grade," as barbers would tell me when they cut it for the first time. It was like a doctor reporting the results of the first full physical he has given you. Like "You're in good shape" or "Blood pressure's kind of high—better cut down on salt."

I spent most of my childhood and adolescence messing with my hair. I definitely wanted straight hair. Like Pop's. When I was about three, I tried to stick a wad of Bazooka bubble gum to that straight hair of his. I suppose what fixed that memory for me is the spanking I got for doing so: he turned me upside down, holding me by my feet, the better to paddle my behind. Little *nigger*, he had shouted, walloping away. I started to laugh about it two days later, when my behind stopped hurting.

When black people say "straight," of course, they don't usually mean literally straight—they're not describing hair like, say, Peggy Lipton's (she was the white girl on "The Mod Squad"), or like Mary's of Peter, Paul & Mary fame; black people call that "stringy" hair. No, "straight" just means not kinky, no matter what contours the curl may take. I would have done *anything* to have straight hair—and I used to try everything, short of getting a process.

Of the wide variety of techniques and methods I came to master in the challenging prestidigitation of the follicle, almost all had two things in common: a heavy grease and the application of pressure. It's not an accident that some of the biggest black-owned companies in the fifties and sixties made hair products. And I tried them all, in search of that certain silken touch, the one that would leave neither the hand nor the pillow sullied by grease.

I always wondered what Frederick Douglass put on *his* hair, or what Phillis Wheatley put on hers. Or why Wheatley has that rag on her head in the little engraving in the frontispiece of her book. One thing is for sure: you can bet that when Phillis Wheatley went to England and saw the Countess of Huntingdon she did not stop by the Queen's coiffeur on her way there. So many black people still get their hair straightened that it's a wonder we don't have a national holiday for Madame C. J. Walker, the woman who invented the process of straightening kinky hair. Call it Jheri-Kurled or call it "relaxed," it's still fried hair.

I used all the greases, from sea-blue Bergamot and creamy vanilla Duke (in its clear jar with the orange-white-and-green label) to the godfather of grease, the formidable Murray's. Now, Murray's was some *serious* grease. Whereas Bergamot was like oily jello, and Duke was viscous and sickly sweet, Murray's was light brown and *hard.* Hard as lard and twice as greasy, Daddy used to say. Murray's came in an orange can with a press-on top. It was so hard that some people would put a match to the can, just to soften the stuff and make it more manageable. Then, in the late sixties, when Afros came into style, I used Afro Sheen. From Murray's to Duke to Afro Sheen: that was my progression in black consciousness.

We used to put hot towels or washrags over our Murray-coated heads, in order to melt the wax into the scalp and the follicles. Unfortunately, the wax also had the habit of running down your neck, ears, and forehead. Not to mention your pillowcase. Another problem was that if you put two palmfuls of Murray's on your head your hair turned white. (Duke did the same thing.) The challenge was to get rid of that white color. Because if you got rid of the white stuff you had a magnificent head of wavy hair. That was the beauty of it: Murray's was so hard that it froze your hair into the wavy style you brushed it into. It looked really good if you wore a part. A lot of guys had parts *cut* into their hair by a barber, either with the clippers or with a straightedge razor. Especially if you had kinky hair—then you'd generally wear a short razor cut, or what we called a Quo Vadis.

We tried to be as innovative as possible. Everyone knew about using a stocking cap, because your father or your uncle wore one whenever something really big was about to happen, whether sacred or secular: a funeral or a dance, a wedding or a trip in which you confronted official white people. Any time you were trying to look really sharp, you wore a stocking cap in preparation. And if the event was really a big one, you made a new cap. You asked your mother for a pair of her hose, and cut it with scissors about six inches or so from the open end—the end with the elastic that goes up to the top of the thigh. Then you knotted the cut end, and it became a beehive-shaped hat, with an elastic band that you pulled down low on your forehead and down around your neck in the back. To work well, the cap had to fit tightly and snugly, like a press. And it had to fit that tightly because it *was* a press: it pressed your hair with the force of the hose's elastic. If you greased your hair down real good, and left the stocking cap on long enough, voilà: you got a head of pressed-against-the-scalp waves. (You also got a ring around your forehead when you woke up, but it went away.) And then you could enjoy your concrete do. Swore we were bad, too, with all that grease and those flat heads. My brother and I would brush it out a bit in the mornings, so that it looked—well, "natural." Grown men still wear stocking caps—especially older men, who generally keep their stocking caps in their top drawers, along with their cufflinks and their see-through silk socks, their "Maverick" ties, their silk handkerchiefs, and whatever else they prize the most.

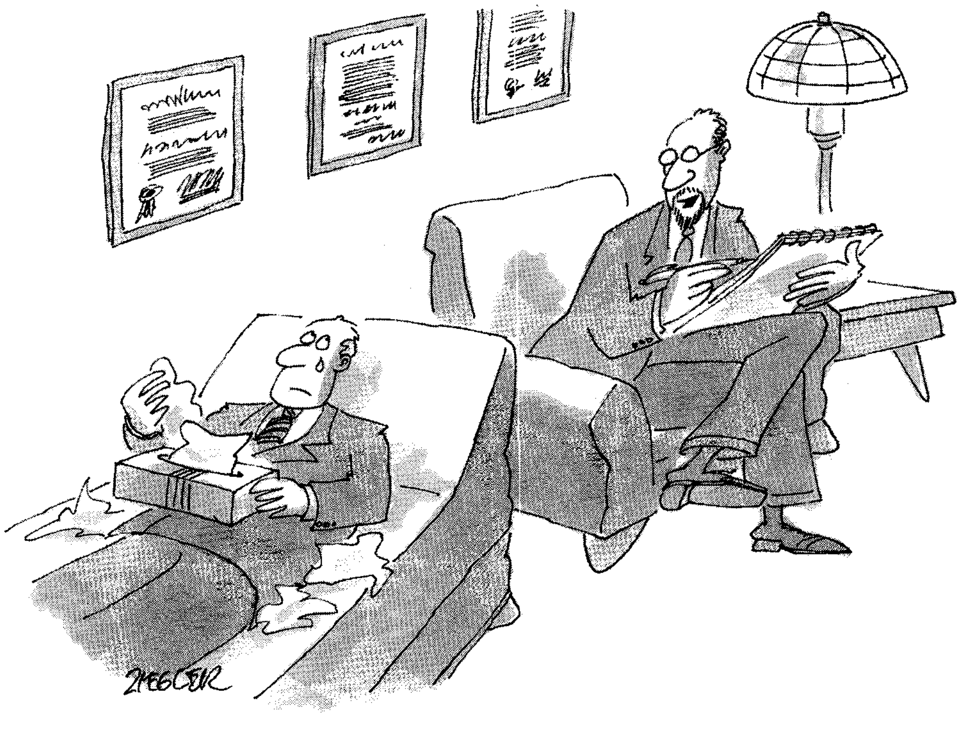
A Murrayed-down stocking cap was the respectable version of the process, which, by contrast, was most definitely not a cool thing to have unless you were an entertainer by trade. Zeke and Keith and Poochie and a few other stars of the high-school basketball team all used to get a process once or twice a year. It was expensive, and you had to go somewhere like Pittsburgh or D.C. or Uniontown—somewhere where there were enough colored people to support a trade. The guys would disappear, then reappear a day or two later, strutting like peacocks, their hair burned slightly red from the lye base. They'd also wear "rags"—cloths or handkerchiefs—around their heads when they slept or played basketball. Do-rags, they were called. But the result was straight hair, with just a hint of wave. No curl. Do-it-yourselfers took their chances at home with a concoction of mashed potatoes and lye.

THE most famous process of all, however, outside of the process Malcolm X describes in his "Autobiography," and maybe the process of Sammy Davis, Jr., was Nat King Cole's process. Nat King Cole had patent-leather hair. That man's got the finest process money can buy, or so Daddy said the night we saw Cole's TV show on NBC. It was November 5, 1956. I remember the date because everyone came to our house to watch it and to celebrate one of Daddy's buddies' birthdays. Yeah, Uncle Joe chimed in, they can do shit to his hair that the average Negro can't even *think* about—secret shit.

Nat King Cole was *clean*. I've had an ongoing argument with a Nigerian friend about Nat King Cole for twenty years now. Not about whether he could sing—any fool knows that he could—but about whether or not he was a handkerchief head for wearing that patent-leather process.

Sammy Davis, Jr.,'s process was the one I detested. It didn't look good on him. Worse still, he liked to have a fried strand dangling down the middle of his forehead, so he could shake it out from the crown when he sang. But Nat King Cole's hair was a thing unto itself, a beautifully sculpted work of art that he and he alone had the right to wear. The only difference between a process and a stocking cap, really, was taste; but Nat King Cole, unlike, say, Michael Jackson, looked *good* in his. His head looked like Valentino's head in the twenties, and some say it was Valentino the process was imitating. But Nat King Cole wore a process because it suited his face, his demeanor, his name, his style. He was as clean as he wanted to be.

I had forgotten all about that patent-leather look until one day in 1971, when I was sitting in an Arab restaurant on the island of Zanzibar surrounded by men in fezzes and white caftans, trying to learn how to eat curried goat and rice with the fingers of my right hand and feeling two million miles from home. All of a sudden, an old transistor radio sitting on top of a china cupboard stopped blaring out its Swahili music and started playing "Fly Me to the Moon," by Nat King Cole. The restaurant's din was not affected at all, but in my mind's eye I saw it: the King's magnificent sleek black tiara. I managed, barely, to blink back the tears. ♦



"Would you like to see the drawing I just did of my doggie?"

THE CRITICS

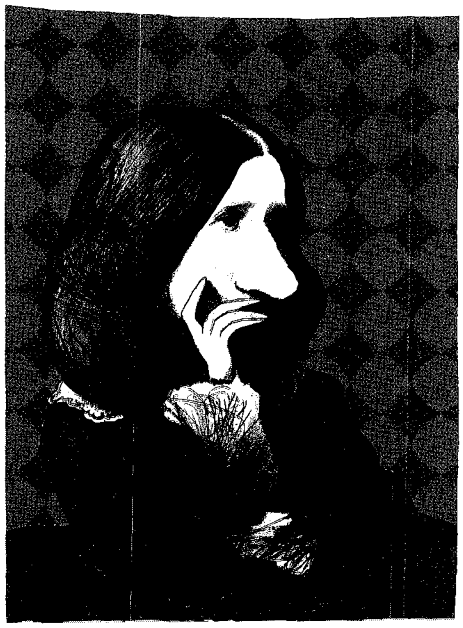
A CRITIC AT LARGE

ENCOUNTERS WITH GEORGE ELIOT

BY SALLY BEAUMAN

BLAZONED across the front cover of the BBC-listings magazine *Radio Times* in January of this year were a young couple in Victorian dress. The man had tousled hair and resembled Byron; the woman wore a gray frock and looked demure. The couple were gazing into each other's eyes and holding hands. Above them the headline read, "Forbidden Love." A Barbara Cartland novel, perhaps, adapted for the screen? But no. Beneath the headline, another, in smaller type, read, "George Eliot's Magnificent 'Middlemarch' Comes to BBC 2." Once upon a time, when the BBC was a more sober organization, it would not have welcomed such a headline for such a novel; but the Thatcher shakedown period is now over, and the new, improved BBC is a much brasher outfit than it once was. It understands marketing.

This six-part television dramatization of one of English fiction's greatest novels—which arrives in the States this week, on PBS, and coincides with the publication of a handsome reissue of "Middlemarch" by the Modern Library ($15, with an introduction by A. S. Byatt)—was big budget in BBC terms at six and a half million pounds. It became big news: the broadsheet newspapers ran erudite pieces about George Eliot, her (extraordinary) life and times; the tabloids, having made the pragmatic decision to present the novel as another soap opera, ran interviews with the actors, asking intrusive questions about their sex lives, and speculated on which would become overnight stars.



As "Middlemarch" wins a new audience, one question remains: Why was George Eliot ever out of favor?

The BBC has been producing so-called "classic serials" for at least thirty years—well-cast, impeccably acted adaptations of Austen and Brontë and Dickens and Trollope and, indeed, George Eliot novels, which usually attracted little publicity but retained a loyal, modest-sized audience. After the phenomenon of Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited," made by a commercial television company, those old stalwarts began to look a little "costume drama," a little passé. But in 1991 the BBC put out a fresh and successful adaptation of Richardson's "Clarissa," followed by two less successful offerings—a truly execrable "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and a travesty of Stendhal's "Le Rouge et le Noir." Then "Middlemarch" happened. It received excellent reviews, and, according to the British BARB ratings, the first episode was seen in 5.65 million households; "Middlemarch" was performing more than respectably. It had reached the No. 1 position on the BBC 2 top-thirty program list. Two weeks later—and if there was ever a testament to the power of television, it was this—paperback editions of "Middlemarch" were selling at the rate of two thousand a day, the kind of figure that, in Britain, would keep John Grisham reasonably happy. By the halfway point in television transmission, "Middlemarch" had reached the top of the paperback-best-seller list. Some deep chord had undoubtedly been struck, but that list looked very odd. There was Danielle Steel, in the No. 2 slot with "Mixed Blessings," and there just above her was a long, complex, magnificent novel by a woman who was a hundred and thirteen years dead.

THE most often quoted comment on "Middlemarch" is Virginia Woolf's. It comes from her essay celebrating Eliot, written in 1919, at a time when Eliot's reputation, once exalted, was in decline. " 'Middlemarch,' " Woolf wrote, "is one of the few English novels written for grown-up people." That, at least, is the quotation in its edited form. Woolf's full assessment was that Eliot was writing at the height of her powers, that the novel, "with all its imperfections," was one of the few written for grownups. Rid of its qualifier, Woolf's quotation appears on the back cover of

JOHN SPRINGS

the new Penguin Classics edition, and it was trotted out again and again in the publicity onslaught that attended the TV series in England. It is easy to see why it has been so useful to publishers: one can hear in the term "grown-up" a slight crack of the Bloomsbury whip. Apprentice readers are warned off; there is the suggestion that those who persevere to the end of the novel are not only mature of mind but also members of a rather select establishment—the George Eliot club.

Perhaps such implicit warnings are necessary—or more necessary now than they were when Woolf wrote. Readers unfamiliar with nineteenth-century fiction, used to leaner novels with quick-cut cinematic techniques, will certainly have to adjust. But even at the time of its publication, serially, in 1871 and 1872, "Middlemarch" was seen as fascinating but demanding—and unusually long. It was a four-volume novel in an age when the three-volume novel was the norm. This made Eliot anxious; she felt "something like a shudder" when a friend asked her to assess its finished length while she was still writing. She noted, though, that it would be no longer than some of Thackeray's work, "and I don't see how the sort of thing I want to do could have been done briefly."

She was surely correct; in the novel's length is its density, its deep perspective, and its sweep. But Eliot's concern was related to worries about its accessibility to readers. On the one hand, she cared that her work be not only read but read *well;* she was hurt when "Middlemarch" was being published in successive parts and friends told her they intended to wait until the entire book was out, and read it "at one go-off." ("You and other good readers," she wrote to her publisher, John Blackwood, "have spoiled me, and made me rather shudder at being read only once.") On the other hand, she wanted to be read widely, at a time when it was still possible for a great novelist to be a popular novelist. Eliot did not share Woolf's sensation, fifty years later, of being cut off from what Woolf called "the great republic of readers." All her life, Eliot maintained a heartfelt and obstinate belief that to write well enough was to effect change: "My function," she wrote, "is that of the *aesthetic* . . . teacher; the rousing of the nobler emotions, which make mankind desire the social right."

This moral seriousness, this sense of mission, flows like a great river through Eliot's books, and it caused her to be mocked during the period after her death when her reputation declined. She was stigmatized as "preachy"; her warmth, her generosity, her intelligence were disregarded, and so was her often caustic wit. Much later, in the postwar period, a reappraisal began. Now, when her standing has perhaps never been higher, it is hard to understand how the writer of "Middlemarch," "Daniel Deronda," and "The Mill on the Floss" could ever have suffered an eclipse.

GEORGE ELIOT'S real name was Mary Ann Evans. She was born in November, 1819, the last of her father's five surviving children by two marriages. She came from what she called the "artisan" class; her grandfather, like Adam Bede in her second work of fiction, was a carpenter. Her father, Robert Evans, was a much respected land agent for the Newdigate family in Warwickshire. Her mother, Christiana, came of Warwickshire yeoman farming stock. Christiana's health declined shortly after Mary Ann's birth, and she was a semi-invalid for much of Mary Ann's childhood. She died when Mary Ann was sixteen: a year later, her youngest daughter was running the household.

From the age of seventeen, Eliot lived alone with her father, first at Griff, a large and beautiful farmhouse he was allocated on the Newdigate estates, and later in Coventry, then a small but developing market town, which is widely accepted as the model for Middlemarch. This period of Eliot's life lasted some thirteen years; it came to an end with her father's death, in 1849. Virginia Woolf, echoing the tone of other commentators on Eliot's life, characterizes these formative years as having been spent in "petty provincial society." Yet there is no indication in Eliot's own journals or letters that she viewed her background in this snobbish and dismissive way. She remained loyal to her roots all her life. The loving but clear-eyed portrait of her father as Caleb Garth in "Middlemarch" makes it evident that Evans embodied the qualities Eliot most admired: he was kind-

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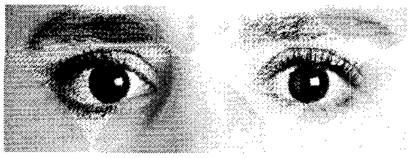

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hearted, direct, a man of integrity. He was also conservative. He had been a youth at the time of the French Revolution; he retained a distrust of violent political change all his life, which Eliot inherited to an extent, and which sometimes sits oddly with her reformist impulses, her feminism, and her moral radicalism. Evans was a large man, both physically and spiritually, and perhaps his greatest legacy to his daughter was a quiet but firm insistence on the distinction between right and wrong: that moral pulse can be felt in all Eliot's writing, and especially in "Middlemarch," the most generous and least doctrinaire of her novels.

The circumstances of Eliot's upbringing provided other seeds that were to bear fruit in her books. Her father's work made him an intermediary between classes; he had daily contact with landed families and their professional advisers, but also with merchants, bankers, shopkeepers, and the poorest tenant farmers and laborers. So the acuity, the accuracy, and the vitality with which George Eliot was able to scrutinize the lives of both the working and the leisured classes was no accident: she did not, like certain of her peers, pass her formative years in some smart urban drawing room.

From her early teens, her days were passed in a turmoil of education, initially at a series of what seem to have been, for the period, enlightened girls' schools. Unlike Dorothea in "Middlemarch," with her crippling "toy box" education, Eliot was taught Greek and Latin; she moved on to French, German, and Italian, and later, teaching herself, she would add Spanish and Hebrew. One of her teachers, Maria Lewis, to whom almost all Eliot's extant early letters are written, was an Evangelical Christian; she helped to unleash and foster an intense religiosity in Eliot.

Eliot's learning was accepted within her family, and encouraged, but her newfound religious ideas were not. They led to arguments with her brother Isaac, to whom she was very close; when the two made their first visit to London together, in 1838 (Eliot was eighteen), Isaac, a High Church Anglican, was infuriated that his fundamentalist sister refused to set foot in a theatre. Only four years later, Eliot swung violently in the opposite direction, refusing to accompany her father to church. Her growing doubts about Christianity and her rejection of organized worship would eventually lead her to a tolerant agnosticism; meanwhile, her new views provoked an angry rift with her father, who refused to continue living with her. They finally made it up, but only when Eliot backed down, and these incidents reveal much about her. The young Eliot, like the young Dorothea, was afflicted with zeal. Her views were sincere, passionately so; they were also tainted by a taste for histrionic gestures, as she herself came to recognize.

This tendency, which Eliot satirizes in Dorothea (in many ways, Dorothea is a self-portrait, and her story a bildungsroman), she came to see as egoism; she would strive to eradicate it from her character. It was also, of course, a by-product of her circumstances. Intellectually, Eliot was outstripping her immediate family and friends, as she had already outstripped her teachers. She had left school shortly before her mother's death, and the strongest impression given by her letters for this period is of isolation. She lives for books: she reads between household tasks, like making red-currant jelly; she reads into the night, and costs the family a small fortune in candles. She devours (still in her late teens) Pascal, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Bacon, Spenser. She moves on to Schiller, Tasso, Carlyle, and Erasmus. She is drawn to philosophy, geology, astronomy, theology. One day she will gorge on a novel by George Sand (she admired Sand's novels all her life); the next she will try Isaac Taylor's "Ancient Christianity, and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts." ("I have gulped it, pardon my coarseness, in a most reptile-like fashion," she wrote of Taylor's book. "I must *chew* it thoroughly to facilitate its assimilation within my mental frame.") This learning did more than flex the muscles of a great mind; it took her into the heart of European culture, and it eventually provided her with a ticket out of Warwickshire.

ONE of the more extraordinary aspects of George Eliot's brilliant career was the rapidity of her advancement after her father's death. The girl who had lived the first thirty years of her life in rural seclusion would be an editor at one of London's leading liberal periodicals within three years, and within a decade she would publish her second work of fiction, to great acclaim. How was this rapid ascent effected? The answer is complex, and not entirely palatable. In the first place, through work, and specifically through the translation of "Das Leben Jesu," a massive tome by the radical German theologian David Friedrich Strauss. (The book was fifteen hundred pages long; it was to perfect her task and deal with Strauss's notes that she taught herself Hebrew.) In the second place, through new, cosmopolitan friends—most usefully, a succession of men to whom she awkwardly, passionately, attached herself. The first was a scholarly doctor with a blind wife, who lived in Wiltshire. Eliot stayed at his house and described herself joyfully as "Deutera," his second daughter. "I am in a little heaven here," she wrote, "Dr. Brabant being its archangel." Her tone foreshadows Dorothea's determination to marry the desiccated scholar-clergyman Casaubon; like her heroine, Eliot was attracted to men's *minds;* their appearance, their age, and sometimes their marital status were irrelevant to her.

Eliot's comments on Brabant are also filled with historic echoes. Consider Charlotte Brontë, who, like Eliot, attached herself to a learned man—her Belgian teacher Constantin Heger—and used the experience in both "The Professor" and "Villette." Brontë, too, found it difficult to disentangle physical and emotional desire from a desire for tuition. One of the saddest aspects of both women—both unmarried, both subservient to their fathers—was that even to themselves they had to disguise their passions, and channel them in ways that their societies could accept; having been dutiful daughters, they adapted only too well to being dutiful pupils.

In Eliot's life, this confusion between love of men and love of the learning men could impart was to cause, initially, pain, remorse, and havoc—a subject that Jennifer Uglow's 1987 biography, "George Eliot," explores. Dr. Brabant's wife finally took exception to her husband's devout new worshipper and kicked her out. It was as a direct result of this friendship, however, that Eliot began her Strauss translation. This pattern of powerful emotions entangled with work and professional advancement would repeat itself. The publisher of her translation was John Chapman: it was to Chapman's home in London that she went, as a lodger, in 1851; it was Chapman who owned the *Westminster Review*, and he launched her career there as a critic, essayist, and editor.

Chapman was a handsome man, influential in London literary circles; he was also a well-known philanderer. His household included his children, his wife, and his mistress—the mistress doubling as the children's governess. Wife and mistress warily coexisted, and they did not take kindly to this provincial thirty-two-year-old spinster who quickly began working with Chapman behind closed doors on manuscripts—editing, for example, the "delicate" passages in Eliza Lynn's novel "Realities." Eliza Lynn's recollections of the gifted, ungainly cuckoo in the Chapman nest were not kind. She "held her hands and arms kangaroo fashion," Lynn wrote; she "was badly dressed; had an unwashed, unbrushed, unkempt look altogether, and . . . assumed a tone of superiority over me. . . . From first to last she put up my mental bristles." Only five months after Eliot's arrival, domestic dramas and London rumors sent her back on the train to Coventry. But she soon returned to London to be an assistant editor of and contributor to the *Westminster Review.*

There is a sense, in descriptions of her written by the *Review's* predominantly male contributors, that they regarded Eliot warily, but bowed to the force of her intellect and her editorial skill, and accepted her as a kind of honorary man. This, it is clear, did not satisfy Eliot. She hungered for love, first from Chapman and then from one of her writers, the philosopher Herbert Spencer. "Those who have known me best," she wrote to him, "have always said, that if ever I loved any one thoroughly my whole life must turn upon that feeling, and I find they said truly." She begged him to respond: "I want to know if you can assure me that you will not forsake me. . . . You will find that I can be satisfied with very little, if I am delivered from the dread of losing it."

Both Chapman and Spencer, faced with Eliot's outpouring of emotional need, her ardor, recoiled. ("Ardor" and "ardent," of course, are favorite Eliot

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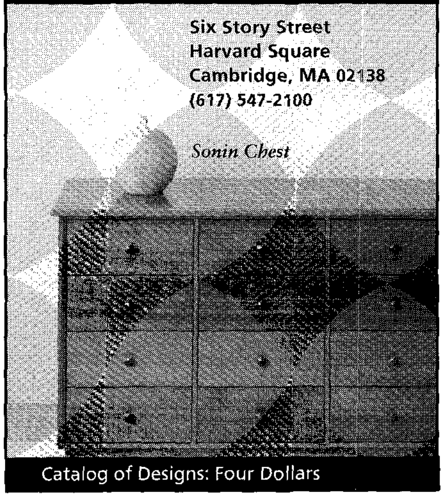

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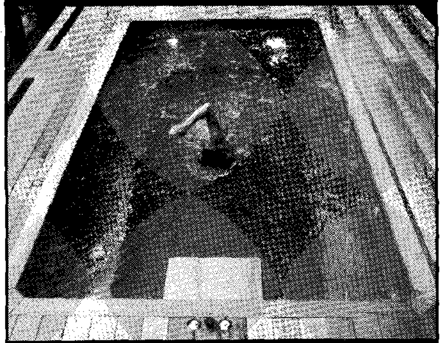

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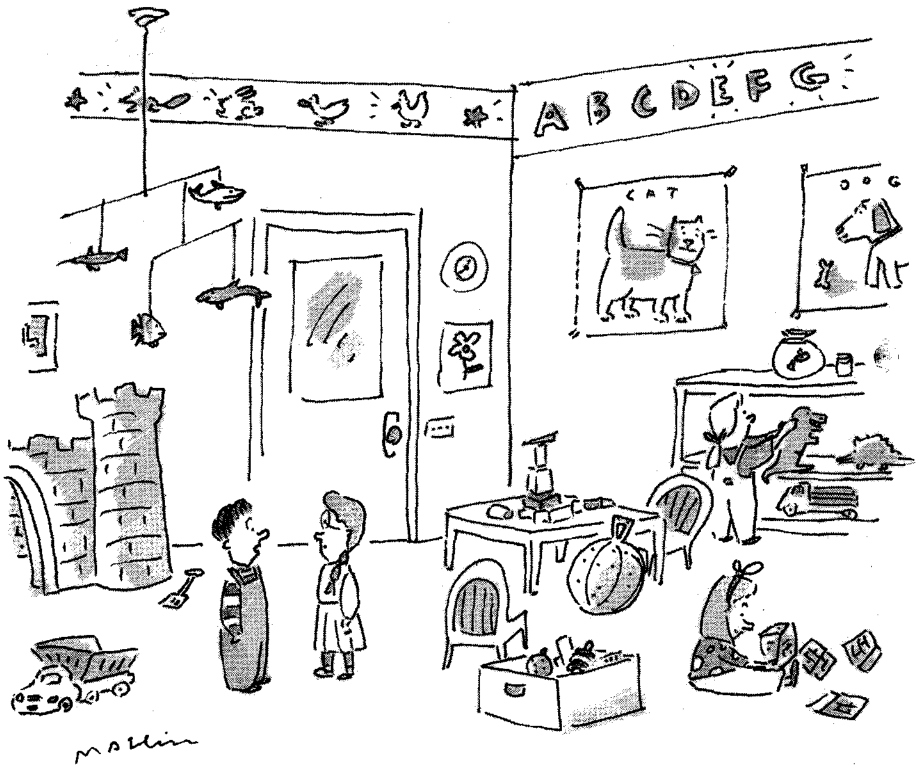

"Well, if not dinner, would you care to join me for snack time?"

• •

words; they are used frequently in "Middlemarch" to describe Dorothea.) Neither was physically attracted to her: Chapman remarked in his diary on her "want of beauty"; Spencer liked her, but seems to have found her too morbidly intellectual. Had Eliot been beautiful—and she bestows the gift of beauty on every one of her heroines—the reactions of Chapman and Spencer might have been different. Charlotte Brontë was frequently described as plain. In Eliot's case, few minced their words: she was *ugly*. Gosse described her, in later life, as "a large, thick-set sybil, dreamy and immobile," her "grim" features surmounted by an incongruous hat and a huge ostrich feather. Even the young Henry James, complimenting her, could not resist ridicule: "Yes, behold me, literally in love with this great horse-faced blue-stocking."

Eliot's fate with regard to men was, however, to be happy. In 1851, through Spencer, Eliot was introduced to George Henry Lewes. She described him as "a miniature Mirabeau"; others' descriptions were less kind. This small, feisty, gregarious man transformed Eliot's life. She disliked him at first, then disputed with him, and, finally, with dry good humor, capitulated. She and Lewes shared a love of music, of German literature (Lewes was to write a biography of Goethe), and of philosophy. With Lewes, she did not have to fear that "danger of living too exclusively in the affections," which she identified as a threat peculiar to women. Lewes was not afraid of her mind: he gloried in it; he answered devotion with devotion. It was he who encouraged her to begin writing fiction, and he who provided for the next twenty-five years of her life the conditions in which her genius could flourish.

There was only one problem: he was married, and was unable to obtain a divorce under English law because he had given his name to his wife's child by another man. But it was characteristic of Eliot that their affair was secret for only a short period. She had always been brave, even defiant; she had always insisted that personal belief was of greater validity than religious stricture or social convention. In 1854, she left openly with Lewes for Germany, returning to live with him in England eight months later. Her action caused predictable outrage, dismay, and scandal. Her brother Isaac cut off all relations with her, and this breach lasted until after Lewes's death, a gap for which she never once reproached her brother. Eliot became socially stigmatized: "respectable" women could not be introduced to her, and the Sunday-afternoon salons that she and Lewes came to hold were attended mainly by men. This meant that, to a remarkable degree, almost all of Eliot's close women friends were radicals, who held advanced views on women's rights—a topic then at the forefront of political debate, and much discussed in the pages of the *Westminster Review*.

Eliot's view of her own position was uncompromising. She was Lewes's true wife; she took his surname; she referred to him as her husband. And the "marriage" to him marked another decisive change in her identity. With the publication, in 1858, of her first fiction, "Scenes of Clerical Life," she became George Eliot. It was in this guise that she would, in more than one sense, "make her name."

She told her first biographer that she chose George in tribute to Lewes—though it has also been suggested that the name was a tribute to George Sand—and the surname because it "was a good mouth-filling, easily pronounced word" ("mouth-filling" being a term that in these circumstances might have arrested Freud). Both she and Lewes were highly amused by the buzz of speculation about the identity of this gentleman who had burst with such success upon the literary scene. Not even her publisher was let in on the secret. Rumors proliferated; that great gossip Mrs. Gaskell fired off inquiries to friends. Only Dickens guessed that George Eliot might be a woman.

Eventually, the truth emerged. But it is interesting that the pseudonym was retained. By the late eighteen-fifties, there were a large number of professional women writers; authors such as Mrs. Oliphant and Mrs. Gaskell saw no need to disguise their gender. Yet Eliot did—and her efforts went beyond the use of a male pen name. Both "Scenes of Clerical Life" and—to a lesser extent—"Adam Bede" (1859) disguise the sex of their narrator. The voice of "Clerical Life" is masculine, a conscious act of ventriloquism; the voice of "Adam Bede," particularly in its opening chapters, is androgynous. And of course it was men—such titans as Dickens, Trol-

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lope, and Thackeray—who occupied the peaks of the literary world; women writers, of whom the most accomplished was Mrs. Gaskell, occupied a lower slope. So to write as a man, to be received and assessed initially as a man, was combative. Eliot's nom de plume was the literary equivalent of ice axe and crampons: thus armed, she could begin her assault on the pinnacle.

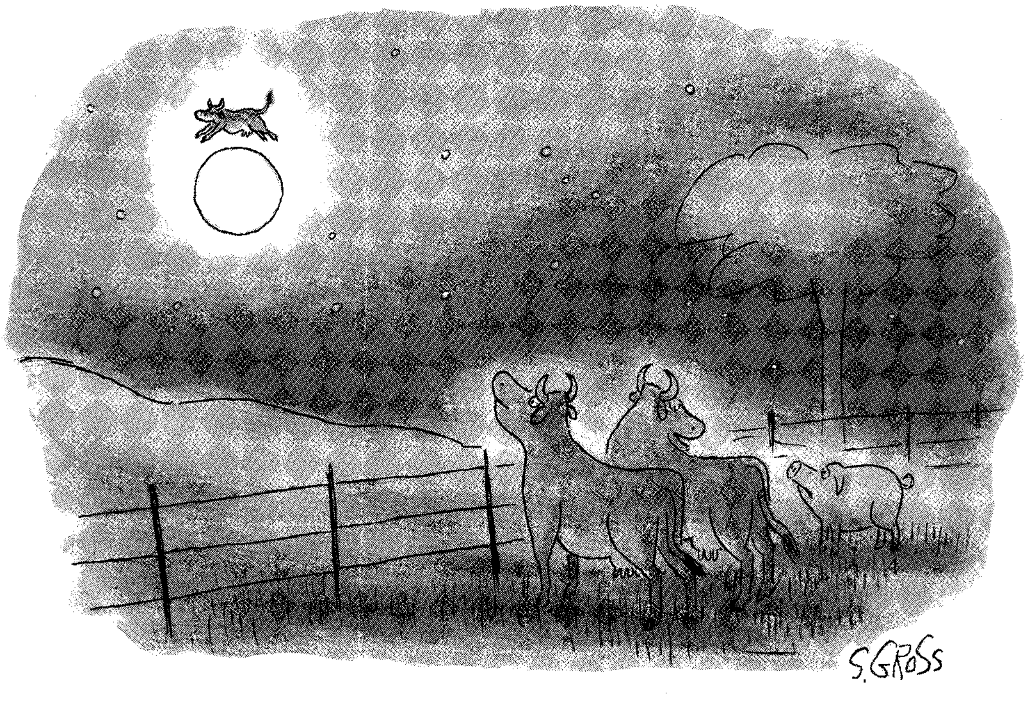
SHE reached it with "Middlemarch," her penultimate novel. By the time it was published, both Thackeray and Dickens were dead. The novel was lauded on publication, and Eliot was widely conceded to be England's greatest living novelist. But even at the time there were dissenters, with Henry James—who admired her work deeply—sounding one of the earliest warning notes. To James, "Middlemarch" was "at once one of the strongest and one of the weakest of English novels," as he wrote in a review, "a treasure-house of details, but . . . an indifferent whole." He asked, "If we write novels so, how shall we write History?"

His doubts were developed by later—and lesser—critics, most notably the influential Oxford professor David Cecil, who found Eliot highbrow, puritanical, and—astonishingly—lacking wit or humor. Eliot and "Middlemarch" were to be decisively rescued in 1948 by that Cambridge firebrand F. R. Leavis, who accorded Eliot a place at the heart of his English "Great Tradition." Women writers who commented on her expressed few reservations. Mrs. Gaskell noted Eliot's gifts as soon as her first fiction was published. Woolf saw her as a kind of precursor to *l'écriture féminine*, "clasping . . . as few women have ever clasped" the "strange bright fruits of art and knowledge." Woolf's prose shimmers with discovery; the shock of recognition as she senses, then celebrates a forebear can be felt in her sentences. And that triumphant connection between female minds can be heard elsewhere, too. "What do I think of 'Middlemarch'?" Emily Dickinson once wrote. "What do I think of glory?"

THE action of "Middlemarch" is confined almost throughout to the small Midlands town of the title, a town that lies in the heartland of England. As the name implies, we are in an unexceptional place, where few break rank and the beliefs of the inhabitants march in well-ordered formation. Eliot drew a location map in her notebooks for the novel, and it shows the exact placing of the large estates that fringe the town. To the south is the estate of Mr. Brooke, where Dorothea lives, and to which she is heir. Just adjacent is the estate of the young, amiable baronet Sir James Chettam. To the north—and it will be, in the novel, a colder clime—lies Lowick, the estate of Dorothea's rich, wellborn husband-to-be, the Reverend Edward Casaubon.

The novel is similarly confined in its time scheme. Apart from a brief coda, all the action takes place in the three years before the great Reform Bill of 1832, which attempted to eradicate some of the corruptions built into the British political system. So Eliot set her novel back forty years; it was published in 1871-72, in the wake of the *second* Reform Bill, of 1867. In that year, there had been a vigorous campaign, to which John Stuart Mill and feminist friends of Eliot had contributed, arguing that voting rights should be extended to women, or at least to "qualified" women. That particular campaign failed, but it meant that Eliot's readers at the time of publication had just had a sharp reminder, not merely of injustices to women but of the behemoth slowness and inadequacy of much political "reform." This hidden perspective on the events in "Middlemarch" is often lost on the modern reader; most critics reviewing the novel then saw immediately that "the women question" was one of its central concerns.

Any brief discussion of the novel inevitably concentrates on the parallel stories of Dorothea and the young doctor Tertius Lydgate, both outsiders to Middlemarch, who will fight not to be assimilated by it. There are numerous other correspondences between them. Both are orphans, both are upper class, both are idealists, both have little experience or understanding of the opposite sex, and both—given their good looks and eligibility—are expected to marry, and marry soon. Both Lydgate and Dorothea, however, have other plans. Lydgate wishes to make Middlemarch a center of medical excellence; he wishes to pursue his researches into the secrets of human tissue. Lydgate is trained; he has a secular vocation. But Dorothea's ambitions have no such channel, since she is a woman; she wants to do good in the world; she herself sees her own strivings



"It's a cow thing. You wouldn't understand."

imperfectly, through a "haze." Lydgate and Dorothea, alike in so many ways, differ in another key respect. He, despite being of good family, has little money; she is independently rich. Lydgate will come to feel trapped by lack of money and Dorothea by its excess. Money, inheritances, wills—these are woven into the complex texture of "Middlemarch"; they will recur in its plotting and color its themes.

"Middlemarch" has frequently been described as a web, a hall of mirrors, an echo chamber—all terms that seek to convey its density, its refractive and reflective qualities. No character in "Middlemarch" can ever be seen alone; all are subject to a constant process of qualification and modification as they interact with and comment upon one another, or as we compare them, or as the narrator leads us toward one set of judgments, and then, with a peroration or a scenic flick of the wrist, turns those judgments inside out and upside down. This process is one of the inherent joys of the book—an element that is essentially missing in the TV adaptation. There, until the very final sequence, the narrative voice is absent, so we lose the ever-developing moral perspective of the novel.

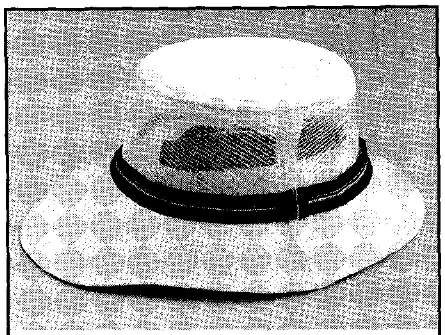
Eliot's breadth and psychological penetration are remarkable throughout. The process by which Rosamond Vincy woos, snares, marries, and ultimately destroys Lydgate, for example, is one of the great sustained pieces of imaginative analysis in English fiction. Remorselessly but with an informing charity, Eliot dissects Lydgate and puts him under a microscope: her authorial task mirrors Lydgate's professional occupation, and provides an ironic commentary upon it—for Lydgate, so skilled when he peers through a lens and dissects tissue, is tragically blind and inept in his dealings with people. Lydgate is a fine man, bent on doing good, but he has inherited class and gender assumptions—"spots of commonness," Eliot calls them. His downfall will be caused partly by his arrogance toward the financier Bulstrode, and his inability to grasp the dangers attendant on Bulstrode's patronage, and partly by his beliefs about women. Women are charming ornaments, there to "adore a man's pre-eminence." They are also the weaker sex, and therefore—Lydgate is gallant—dependent on men for protection. He will be undone by this combination of masculine tenderness and male chauvinism. Rosamond, who was working at chain stitch when he proposed, swiftly works upon his weaknesses and enchains him. We watch with horror and fascination as Lydgate—bewildered, only half perceiving his fate—moves inexorably toward destruction.

There has been no critical dissent regarding the Lydgate sequence: it has a stunning, Aeschylean inevitability. But the outcome of Dorothea's story has proved more controversial. "Expect to be immensely disappointed with the close of 'Middlemarch,' " Eliot wrote to a friend a month before the final part of the novel was published. She was right. Her audience could stomach neither the widowed Dorothea's remarriage to the dazzlingly handsome Will Ladislaw nor the author's insistence that Dorothea's destiny has been to become a wife and mother, her benign influence "incalculably diffusive," perhaps, but her bounteous spirit having trickled away and "spent itself in channels." To this criticism, of course, there is a cheap reply: Dorothea begins the novel a Brooke and ends it by remaining one.

Some contemporary critics of "Middlemarch" found this puzzling. James felt that it showed "slender poetic justice." Later critics, including (recently) feminists, have berated Eliot for not writing a completely different book. Why, they ask, is Dorothea such a dispiriting combination of the ambitious and the supine? Why, after Casaubon's death, when Dorothea has an estate and a fortune, can she not get a life? In short, why in hell can she not remain single?

This line of questioning is unfruitful. It is akin to asking Marlowe why he wrote "Tamburlaine" and not "Coriolanus." We must assume that Eliot believed her resolution of Dorothea's predicament was truthful and—as she stresses—more typical. There are many, many women, she emphasizes, who hope for more when young but "dwindle into a wife," as Congreve's Millamant puts it, and eventually find a quieter domestic fulfillment.

It is at this point that the second school of critics enters, baying for blood: a second marriage, very well, but not to Will Ladislaw. Poor Ladislaw! He has had a very rough ride, critically; he has



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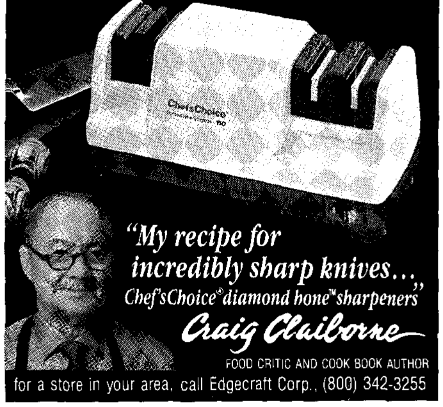

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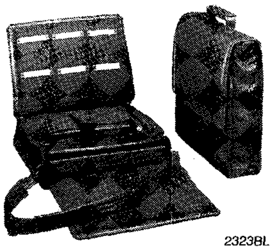

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almost always been viewed the way Sir James Chettam views him in the novel—as a "man of little principle and light character." From Henry James through Leavis, even those critics who admire Eliot find him thinly imagined, unconvincing, with a fictive insubstantiality that undermines the veracity of the Dorothea story.

All of which is true: Ladislaw does *not* convince. In his later scenes with Dorothea, in particular, Eliot's sure touch seems to desert her. Their final love scene takes place in the dead Casaubon's home, to the accompaniment of a thunderstorm. This storm does not read well; it is a secondhand storm, courtesy of the Brontës. It is there, one suspects, to give resonance to a scene that is patched together with stagy dialogue and an excess of desperate adverbs. The kiss that punctuates it—with trembling lips on both sides—is, alas, a kiss that the silliest of lady novelists might have envied.

Sexual attraction—indeed, sex period—is not Eliot's strong point. She can convey it when she is writing about a female character of whom she does not approve—Rosamond, say, or, in her last novel, Gwendolen Harleth—but she has difficulty permitting sexuality to her "good" women. Even so, something has gone badly wrong by the time Eliot reaches this crucial scene, and it is not simply that authorial adulation of Dorothea, which has already been mounting dangerously high, now spills over. I suspect that Eliot's intentions were to depict romantic love, within a very careful framing. It is clear that, to Ladislaw, Dorothea remains throughout a Madonna; to Dorothea, Ladislaw—who is disadvantaged in social terms, having once been robbed of a legacy and once disinherited—remains a cause. Their coming together, then, ought indeed to have a fictive insubstantiality, since both are caught up in the nature of romance, unaware that they are deluded. It should never be forgotten that, in marrying Ladislaw, Dorothea is marrying her first husband's cousin. Ladislaw may seem the opposite of Casaubon—he has a lightweight charm, whereas Casaubon was charmless—but the results of the two marriages are not dissimilar. The second is no doubt happier—there are children, and the eldest son will inherit Mr. Brooke's estate, so Ladislaw's offspring will revert to being landed gentry—but Dorothea herself achieves little. Her two husbands wear different disguises—the first that of the father-mentor, the second that of the young knight in shining armor—and she is twice duped, for they demand the same price: the surrender of her identity.

This is the story that Eliot begins to tell, but somewhere en route she loses her nerve, perhaps fearing that its pessimism would offend her readers, perhaps finding that she could not remain sufficiently distant from her material, perhaps giving in to her need to sanctify Dorothea, a woman with whom she clearly identifies. Whatever the reason, the diamond is flawed. One underlying cause can be conjectured: given the circumstances under which "Middlemarch" was written, it was almost certainly exhaustion.

ELIOT first mentions "Middlemarch" in her journal entry for January 1, 1869; she refers to the novel as one of "many tasks" she has set herself for the coming year. Although she did a great deal of background research—particularly in medicine, and in the laws pertaining to wills and inheritances—and actually began writing the Vincy-family and Featherstone sections, 1869 was a painful year for her and Lewes, and not one conducive to writing. In May, Lewes's son returned home from South Africa, seriously ill with a spinal disease; he died that October. In the early months of 1870, Eliot makes little mention of the novel in her journals or letters; it finally caught hold of her in November, when she began writing "Miss Brooke," which she envisaged originally as a separate short story. Two months later, she had written a hundred pages of what became the opening chapters of "Middlemarch." The character of Dorothea clearly turned some key. From that moment on, Eliot wrote intensively and at speed: from the introduction of the Dorothea plotline to the completion of the novel took her under two years. She was also under mounting pressure: since the novel was first issued at intervals, she had to scramble to keep up with the prearranged pace of publication, unable to revise the earlier sections. This fact helps explain some of the rather crude and condensed plotting that is evident in the novel's second half.

Her letters convey vividly the exhilaration she experienced—also the troughs of anxiety, discouragement, and fatigue. There were moments of serenity, too: "Imagine me," Eliot wrote, from a country bolt-hole, "seated near a window, opening under a verandah, with flower-beds and lawn and pretty hills in sight, my feet on a warm water bottle, and my writing on my knees. In that attitude, my mornings are passed." The reference to the water bottle reminds us that neither Eliot's nor Lewes's health was strong. Her letters chart a relentless series of ailments—headaches, sore throats, chills, colds, kidney infections, and general malaise. (The effect is often unintentionally comic: two valetudinarians who can nonetheless summon up the energy to write another twenty pages or read a little Spinoza.) Despite all this, Eliot maintains her astonishing capacity to work, and work creatively.

Birth pangs can be heard in Eliot's narrative voice, which is notably different from that of her earlier work. In a novel concerned with egoism and the distortions of perception that egoism causes (each character is "reading" his own story and misreading the stories of others), not even the narrator is exempt from the charge of solipsism. As the tale progresses, the narrator's omniscience is challenged by the variety of viewpoints in the novel, by the clash of competing values; it is undermined by authorial commentary that questions, or even repudiates, the validity of judgments that the author's own scenes have conveyed. This author cannot and will not let the usual nineteenth-century conspiracy between author and reader remain. Consider the opening of Chapter XXIX, the introduction to the celebrated analysis of the Casaubon-Dorothea marriage from the husband's point of view:

> One morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick, Dorothea—but why always Dorothea? Was her point of view the only possible one with regard to this marriage?

This jerk of authorial rebellion against her own adherence to convention shows a writer who is—almost angrily—striving to build new techniques before the reader's eyes. This is the novel with its rigging, its sets, its lighting equipment exposed. Henry James felt that the book set "a limit to the development of the old-fashioned novel." Yet could it not be

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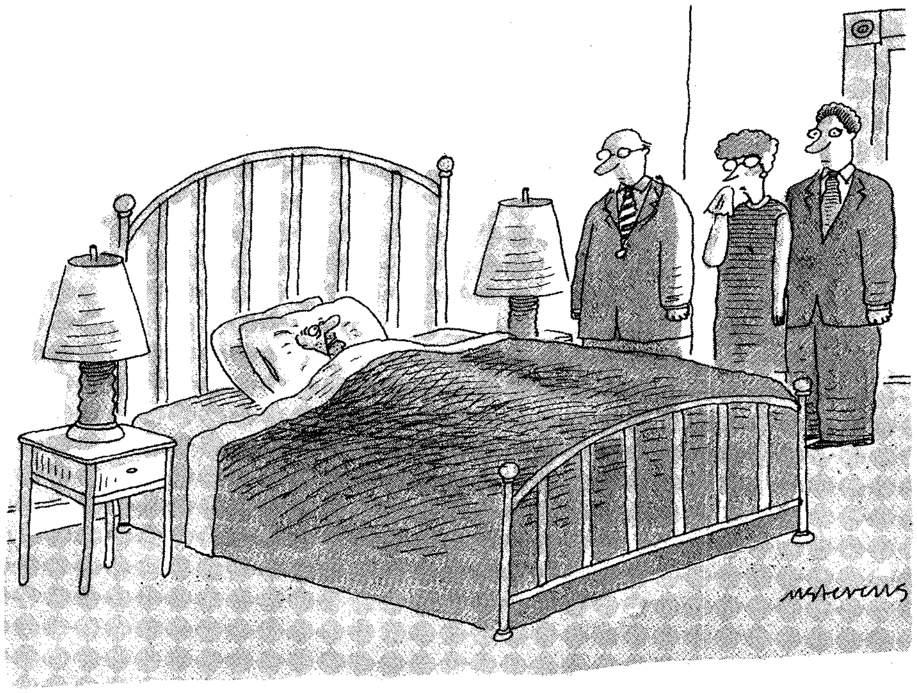
said that with that exasperated interjection—*but why always Dorothea?*—an old form begins to die, and the cry of a new child is heard?

Alas, Eliot wrote only one more novel, the strange and fascinating "Daniel Deronda." There, in the opening chapters, the break with "Middlemarch" seems complete. We find a bored heroine playing roulette in a European casino; the style is hard, compressed, almost unrecognizable; the date of publication is 1876, but it feels much closer to us, as if we were in an Edwardian, an Edith Wharton world. That year, Lewes's health began to decline; he died of cancer in November, 1878. Eliot survived him by only two years. She went through what was evidently a period of intense misery, during which she completed Lewes's last book for him and spent her days resolutely alone. Then, eight months before her death, she married, for the first time. Her husband was John Cross, a man twenty years younger than she. Certain commentators, Richard Ellmann among them, have suggested that Cross, whom Eliot met in Rome when she had begun to work on "Middlemarch," was the model for Will Ladislaw, but there is no suggestion that Eliot was either involved with or interested in another man during Lewes's lifetime.

There was one last blackly comic episode. During their honeymoon in Venice, Cross threw himself out of their hotel window, into the Grand Canal. He was fished out, and suffered no serious injuries; the incident was one that neither he nor Eliot ever explained in their writings. Back in London, Eliot's rivals and enemies spread the rumor that Cross had taken this drastic action in response to his sixty-year-old wife's rapacious sexual demands. But then, as Eliot so effectively shows in "Middlemarch," gossip and rumor, though powerful forces, are frequently cruel and rarely reliable.

Eliot died of heart trouble shortly after their return to London, only nineteen days after moving into a new house that they had purchased in Cheyne Walk. Cross lived some forty years longer. He published the first "biography" of his late wife, in 1885, in the form of edited extracts from her letters and journals, with short linking passages of his own. Cross's description of his first meeting with his wife is rarely quoted, perhaps because it is a little too pretty, too Victorian, for modern tastes. Yet, if we adopt the principles of modification constantly at work in "Middlemarch," it should perhaps be set alongside the harsher visions. Cross wrote, "I still seem to hear, as I first heard them, the low, earnest, deep musical tones of her voice: I still seem to see the fine brows, with the abundant auburn-brown hair framing them . . . the grey-blue



"I never wore khakis."

eyes, constantly changing in expression . . . the finely formed, thin, transparent hands."

THE woman recedes behind these accounts, these images; the artist remains. "Middlemarch" has endured, as Eliot hoped her work would. Writing to Harriet Beecher Stowe the year she began work on "Middlemarch," she expressed her belief that the influence of a great book was a cumulative one. It was spread by a process of radiation—by word of mouth between readers—and that process was slow. "No exquisite book tells properly and directly on a multitude, however largely it may be spread by type and paper," she commented. She was, of course, writing in a very different world from ours.

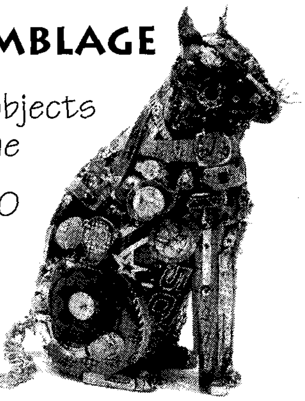
Now, in our electronic age, a version of "Middlemarch" has reached millions—certainly a multitude, by Eliot's standards—via television. And as an introduction to the novel Andrew Davies's adaptation for the BBC is by no means bad. Davies, in constant demand for dramatizations and original series (it seems that scarcely a month goes by without more of his work appearing on British television), has filleted and reorganized the novel in places, as was inevitable, but he has done his job sensitively and well. He was not helped by being allotted only six episodes; his dramatization is overcompressed. In a richer, bolder television era, "Brideshead Revisited," a much shorter and very average novel, was allowed to sprawl over eleven episodes.

The acting in the BBC version is, almost without exception, wonderful. There is a consummate Mr. Brooke from Robert Hardy; Sir Michael Hordern is a superbly dotty and alarming Featherstone, entertaining the circling vultures of his family on his deathbed, bullying Mary Garth for a bedpan, threatening to cut Fred Vincy out of his will—all beneath a wig like a demented broom, worn at a rakish angle. There are fine, intelligent performances from some of Britain's best character actors: Peter Jeffrey as Bulstrode, for example. And the young Douglas Hodge gives a performance of great sensitivity, honoring Lydgate's arrogance as well as his gentleness. If the women are a little disappointing (Juliet Aubrey, as Dorothea, begins earnestly and shows little inclination to progress beyond there; Trevyn McDowell, as Rosamond, is too coy), there are some compensating surprises—particularly Rufus Sewell, who, helped by those Byronic looks, seizes the unpromising role of Ladislaw, eroticizes it, and makes the man a force onscreen which he rarely is in the novel.

The direction, by Anthony Page, once a Royal Court wunderkind, is not of this calibre. At best, it is reserved; at worst, it plods or nudges. There are too many lingering shots of quaint period exteriors, too many extras doing Mummerset rather than Midlands accents, and too many shots of a market never once seen in the novel. We could do without Lydgate arriving in Middlemarch by coach, passing a railway line under construction, pointing to it, and saying, "The future!" We could certainly do without the vender in the marketplace hawking a delicacy Eliot never mentions, Middlemarch pies. This kind of heritage television should be consigned to the BBC's bin: it is embarrassing, and it wastes precious time.

Meanwhile, with its faults and its virtues, the television "Middlemarch" was a *succès fou* in England. The BBC, which only a few years ago was putting its classic serials on quiet Sunday evenings, when parents exhausted at the end of a weekend might prevail upon their children to watch a little improving Dickens or Austen, has realized that it is sitting on an unexploited asset. Now, it seems, there is a new and enthusiastic audience for these serials. In the pipeline at present we have "Pride and Prejudice," "Hard Times," "Martin Chuzzlewit" (with Paul Scofield), and "The Buccaneers"—all to be broadcast, like "Middlemarch," in prime time.

Good books, like Paul Scott's "The Jewel in the Crown" and Olivia Manning's "The Balkan Trilogy," have made good television. Great books seem to resist adaptation. How many have been made into great films? The Russian "War and Peace"? Lean's "Great Expectations"? The list is not long, but that is immaterial. Adaptations are, by their very nature, shadows. The books remain, and their substance is unaltered. "Middlemarch" in dramatized form is enjoyable, and will no doubt please many viewers, but the novel awaits its next generation of "grown-up" readers—and re-readers. ♦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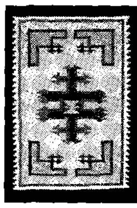
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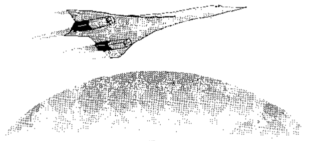

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ON TELEVISION

"X" FACTOR

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

CERTAIN responses are guaranteed. In biology class, there was always some jokester who would try to gross out his lab partner by hiding dissected frog parts in his or her desk—usually hers. The girl would open a candy wrapper only to find a frog's eye staring back at her. Advances in special effects have enabled filmmakers to elevate silly pranks into schlock horror. HBO's campy anthology series "Tales from the Crypt," also syndicated on Fox, dangles a buggy eyeball in almost every episode, topping a cannibal platter of guts, stumps, and slimy gunk. Its Grand Guignol doesn't stick to the mind. Playing with one's food and making a mess is easy. What's hard is giving shape to the shadows on the ceiling—creating horror not out of human meat but out of the unresolved business of the unconscious. "The X-Files" (Fox, Fridays), which is the work of Chris Carter, employs scare tactics—blood spitting from a face slapped by an invisible hand, a locustlike plague infesting a courtroom—but it doesn't let them upstage its speculative purpose. Each episode is a mood piece—a queasy odyssey. It's television's first otherworldly procedural. Although its ratings have been in the basement, "The X-Files" has been building a cult audience and has the makings of a classic. (The show has been renewed for a second season.) "The X-Files" is as scary as "The Twilight Zone," and much sexier.

Like "The Twilight Zone," "The X-Files" expresses a national unease, which helps explain its hold on our nerves. "The Twilight Zone," first broadcast in 1959, was the dark negative of the sunny snapshots of suburbia shown on sitcoms like "Ozzie and Harriet" and "Leave It to Beaver." Created by Rod Serling, who also acted as its host, the show served as a night watchman to the anxieties of the atomic age. It presented worst-case scenarios of what might happen if the launch buttons were pushed: neighbors beat on the doors of bomb shelters closed to outsiders; Norman Rockwell villages became ghost towns, a tattered calendar telling us when time stopped; on bare plains, survivors shrivelled in the sun like bugs under a magnifying glass. Whether the threat was missiles or flying saucers, our skies were not safe. Other planets offered no refuge, as astronauts found themselves wriggling in air, tweezered between giant fingers.

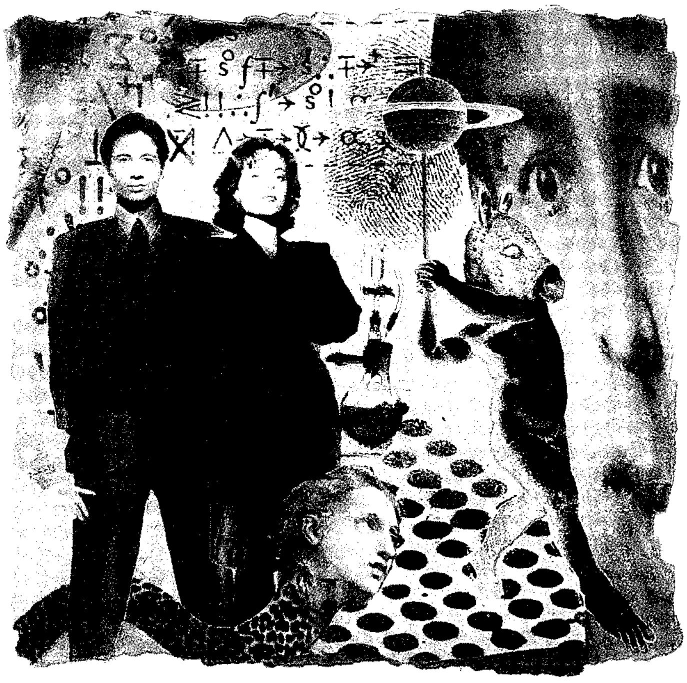
The cardboard construction of "The Twilight Zone" didn't cheapen its sense of dread; it functioned as thin insulation against the abyss. The show's very lack of production values promoted a stark-bare allegorical staging. I remember having nightmares over an episode in which doll-like characters were trapped in a barrel, verbally abusing one another for what seemed like eternity—a pocket version of Sartre's "No Exit." (Hell is other puppets.) That toy barrel, like the show's bomb shelters, reflected a bunker mentality. The question posed by "The Twilight Zone" was: Who will survive the next blast? And will survival be anything more than death warmed over?

The Cold War is absent from "The X-Files," replaced by a more cosmic paranoia. The show reflects the end of the millennium, the flip side of the New Age. Beneath the soothing cover of incense, mantras, and Tibetan chants, rude beasts are awakening—Gnosticism reborn. The term X-Files refers to hush-hush, top-secret F.B.I. case studies of paranormal activity. Investigating new outbreaks are the F.B.I. agents Fox "Spooky" Mulder (David Duchovny), a believer, and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), a skeptic. Their partnership achieves a rare parity between the sexes, a personal regard shown in subtle body shifts and a steady rebound of eye contact. They're more than ghostbusters. All escapees from the netherworld are in their jurisdiction, be they vampires, poltergeists, astral projections, firestarters, telekinetics, satanic cultists, psychic surgeons, alien abductees, possessed animals, replicants, reincarnated spirits, shape shifters, or local chapters of the international brotherhood of zombies. Occult signs abound. Pentagrams. Crop circles. Crucifixes. The show's Sherlock Holmes satisfactions derive from its forensic zeal in the face of garish horror, its refusal to be ruffled or bumped off course. This refusal also accounts for the show's deadpan humor, as each eruption in the energy field is met with dry-ice understatement by Mulder or capped by an inspired sick joke. (At the end of the firestarter episode, the human torch—sealed in a hyperbaric tube, his body blistered with burns—was asked by a nurse if there was anything she could get him. Turning his charred face to the camera, he said, "I'm just dying for a cigarette.")

What's distinctive about "The X-Files," apart from its ingenious story lines and gun-swivel camerawork, is its suffused atmosphere. Shot in Vancouver, the show's exteriors seem familiar yet anonymous—muted. David Lynch wrecked the trance of "Twin Peaks" when he abandoned all interest in even a quaint semblance of normality and began to strobe the screen in a fit of expressionism. (His feature film "Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me" was even trippier.) "The X-Files" doesn't make the mistake of elevating its sensibility at the expense of its subjects. It takes time to seep into its surroundings. An episode about a bisexual succubus stalking the disco scene evoked the warehouse purgatory of the porn director John Leslie's "Catwoman" films, with their deep blues, prowling shadows, and industrial din.

Once an episode earns your faith, no avenue seems too far out. One outstanding "X-File" episode began with a camera pan of suburban back yards, across isolated squares of pasture. A young girl clutching a stuffed animal draws the attention of a passing couple, who follow her into her back yard. On the swing set, her father sits slumped, his back to us. In his neck are a pair of puncture wounds. "Daddy?" No answer. Daddy's been drained of blood. Vampires? Cattle mutilators upgrading to human prey? No, this blood tap proves to be the by-product of a cloning experiment that resulted in a spate of bad seeds. All the female clones were named Eve and were endowed with extra chromosomes that made them super-smart, super-strong, psychotic, and prone to suicide. (There's an amazing shot of all the identical Eves posed for a group portrait—at a swing set.) The episode ends with the last remaining clones, Eve 9 and Eve 10—telepathic twins, played with spooky calm by sisters Erika and Sabrina Krievins—imprisoned in an institution for the criminally insane, an iron dungeon fit for Hannibal Lecter. (Visitors are issued panic buttons.) They appear to be there for the duration. But the last shot is of their clone mother, the Eve of Eves, come to claim her daughters. "How did you know I'd come for you?" she asks. Eve 9: "We just knew." Eve 10: "We just knew."

Nothing is put to rest on "The X-Files." The open-endedness of the Eve episode and others indicates not only the untrappable nature of these forces but the show's refusal to pronounce final judgment. Where "The Twilight Zone" was wrapped tight, everything tied together with an O. Henry twist, "The X-Files" is suspended. Its adversaries aren't evil; they're "genetically driven"—damaged from within. Absolution was even granted to a serial killer on death row, played by Brad Dourif as if he himself had been kept in a box. Claiming that he could channel the voice of a kidnap victim, the killer tried to cut himself a deal: I help catch the kidnapper, you spare me the gas chamber. As Dourif dialled into different psyches, he worked his face like a quick-change artist—you could see his pale features bubble and form lumps before they set into the face of someone new. What made the performance more than a technical feat was the passionate overflow he brought to his plight—his redneck fury to hold on to the last inch of life. In league with the dead, he had the cracked karma that Norman Mailer claimed for Gary Gilmore.



David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson in "The X-Files."
It's as scary as "The Twilight Zone," and much sexier.

J.W. STEWART

The show squirms most when it is closest to the fetal position. Stencilled across the stormy sky at the beginning of each "X-File" episode are the words "THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE." But the show is much more of an inward journey than even the hunkered-down "Twilight Zone" was. The truth is that the general population shows less interest in studying the sky for answers than it did in the early days of the space race. The fascination with U.F.O.s has flagged as the focus has shifted to alien abduction, which is more of a psychological event. Even the starship voyages on "Star Trek" look nostalgic now—rides on a riverboat. As the world becomes more wired, a giant cranium webbed with computer lines, it becomes too enmeshed in its own mental processes to extend an eye into the universe. Constant self-monitoring can lead to sick thought, hypochondria. "The X-Files" is the product of yuppie morbidity, a creeping sense of personal mortality. (The sense of mortality in "The Twilight Zone" was the prospect of mass annihilation—*We're all gonna die!*) It tries to cheat the big sleep by prying open so many doors into the beyond. Where middlebrow culture has begun to ponder angels again, pop culture courts immortality through soul migration or in hologram images or through the rejuvenation of cells or conversion into electrical charges. Nobody on "The X-Files" is ever *dead* dead. People die with a shudder, their souls removed like luggage, to be rerouted elsewhere. Perhaps the afterlife will be part of the information superhighway, a hub in cyberspace. What's erotic about the show is its slow progression from reverie to revelation, stopping just short of rapture. It wants to swoon, but swooning would mean shutting its eyes, and there's so much to see. ♦

THE THEATRE

JOHNNY ONE NOTE

BY JOHN LAHR

Helen Hayes, in her two volumes of autobiography, repeats the same anecdote about her mother's first reaction, in 1925, to her future son-in-law, the hard-drinking, good-looking, rambunctious cynic and womanizer Charles MacArthur, who was already on his way to becoming one of New York's literary smart cookies, and who wooed and finally won "the first lady of the American stage." "He's a satire," her mother said. She meant "satyr." Seventeen years later, in "Johnny on a Spot," his first solo effort as a playwright, MacArthur tried satire. (He meant satire, but it came out hokum.) The play, which closed after four performances in 1942, has now been resurrected in London by Richard Eyre at the Royal National Theatre, without either the liquored-up author as director or the bombing of Pearl Harbor the previous month as an excuse for its collapse. The Royal National Theatre (whose revivals of Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, Arthur Miller, and the recent "Carousel," not to mention its staging of important new work by David Mamet and Tony Kushner, have served American theatre better than any producing institution in the republic itself) can throw actors, money, and energy at "Johnny on a Spot," but it can't do anything about its structure. The play is a weird and hectic spectacle, like a car on blocks racing its engine: the wheels move but the vehicle goes nowhere.

When so much talent takes so much trouble to achieve so little, it's important to ask why. MacArthur's Election Eve story of the wayward Governor Jefferson Davis Upjohn (the Robin Hood of Dixie to the public, and Johnny to his friends) and his band of screwball pragmatists hellbent on getting him elected to the Senate originally had some generalized Southern-populist echoes of Huey Long and now reads to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic as a metaphor for the sexual and political chicanery of the current batch of politicians. With such a vast American repertoire of successful plays still to be mined, Richard Eyre's blinkered devotion to this badly built fun machine is hard to explain. The clue comes at the very end of the show, when the projections, which throughout the evening have let us glimpse Johnny in his rollicking extracurricular activities, flash a black-and-white film logo on the screen:

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Eyre isn't, in fact, making a theatrical satire on American politics at all. He's making something much more irresistible: an American movie. So, really, was MacArthur.

In the twenties, MacArthur and his writing partner and fellow Chicago nihilist Ben Hecht shot to fame on Broad-

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way with "The Front Page," and they sustained their success into the thirties with the stage hits "Twentieth Century" and "Jumbo." "Our friendship was founded on a mutual obsession. We were both obsessed with our youthful years," Hecht writes in his autobiography, "A Child of the Century." "For twenty-five years we assisted each other in behaving as if these pasts had never vanished. We remained newspaper reporters and continued to keep our hats on before the boss, drop ashes on the floor and disdain all practical people." Together, as Hecht writes, they "made much noise," especially in Hollywood, where they were so successful that they got a million-dollar deal to write, produce, and direct movies of their own choice at the Astoria Studio, on Long Island. In 1935, Hecht and MacArthur won an Academy Award for their screenplay for "The Scoundrel." "The society of other successful people will flatten an anarchist into an amateur butler," Hecht writes; and "Johnny on a Spot" is proof of the attrition of a writing decade devoted to the big public and big paydays. Hecht goes on about the nice-nellyism that MacArthur's play is symptomatic of: "Our talents, like our waterfalls, have all been harnessed to make life pleasanter for the Public. The iconoclastic or anti-public artist exists no more than an anti-public traction company."

Here, having learned the lessons of commerce well, MacArthur has written cameos that approximate the lovable eccentricities of many bankable Hollywood figures. Upjohn's face on the posters is, according to the stage directions, "a bit like W. C. Fields." Likewise, the party machine's proposed gubernatorial replacement for Upjohn is the dithering Doc Blossom (Michael Bryant), whose wistful fumbling is more than a little bit like Frank Morgan's. He enters with a macaw on his arm and not a political thought in his chucklehead. "Anybody want to be governor?" he asks later, as he contemplates having to give up his world-class collection of poultry for power. MacArthur spices his crazy stew with a dollop of Marx Brothers buffoonery in the shape of the Governor's goofy bodyguard, Pepi Pisano (Howard Ward), who speaks MacArthur's folderol with Chico's Italian delivery and a frizzy head of Harpoish hair. Against this happy face of Southern corruption MacArthur plays off a fast-talking pair of Northern go-getters—Upjohn's slick campaign manager, Nicky Allen (the excellent Mark Strong), and the Governor's pert secretary, Julie Glynn (the appealing Janie Dee). These two are punch-pressed out of the William Powell–Myrna Loy smart-ass mold; they probably meet cute in their dreams. MacArthur, whose come-on to Helen Hayes was to offer her a handful of peanuts saying "I wish they were emeralds," and who twenty years later gave her emeralds saying "I wish they were peanuts," had a good line in witty badinage. Even at the finale, as Nicky comes up with a scheme to forge the Governor's signature and Julie tops his efforts to detour the democratic process in order to save their bacon and their marriage prospects, the banter has a familiar cinematic ring. When Julie sees off the bimbo who has eyes for Nicky, a Joan Blondell stand-in by the name of Barbara Webster, played by Geraldine Fitzgerald with an accent as erratic as her comic timing, she says, "There's also a sign out there that says: 'No Tramps Allowed.' Ignore it." This kind of writing has more gums than teeth. The form itself is as corrupt as the culture it purports to satirize. Its avowed goal is not to challenge the society but to win an audience's heart while picking its pocket.

In the program Bill Hootkins is listed as taking Governor Upjohn's part. Hootkins is a damn good American actor, who hails from Texas and resides in Great Britain. To a seasoned theatregoer he is a guarantee of a humorous, high-energy, acerbic, and intelligent performance. We see a lot of Hootkins' jowly, ribald presence on posters and on projections of Upjohn cavorting with whores and sprawling in his cups in front of country liquor stores, but that's as close as Upjohn and Hootkins get to the Royal National stage. Governor Upjohn, MacArthur's central character and the man around whom the whole comic world spins, never shows up in the flesh. This breaks Rule No. 1 of farce's game: *The subject of the play must appear in it.* MacArthur's omission isn't so much daring as obtuse. The absence of the Governor from the proceedings saps the stage life of both high stakes and urgency. All the events that galvanize the pols—Upjohn's drunken binge

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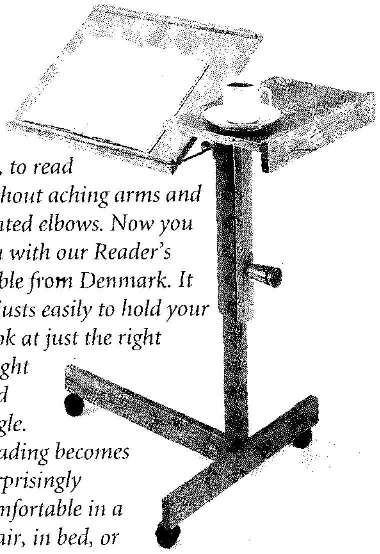

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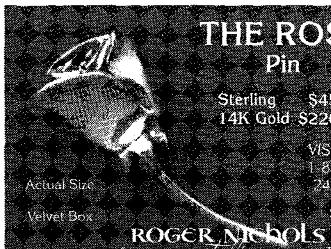

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before his final election speech, his escape from his minder, his taking refuge in Pearl LaMonte's whorehouse, his death—happen offstage. This leaves the audience frustrated and the actors hyperventilated. Theatrically speaking, they're racing to make a red light. The play can't accelerate; it merely narrates. In farce, especially, *Actions should be seen and not heard of,* which is Rule No. 2. The audience suspects trouble by the end of the long opening scene, when Doc Blossom's squawking macaw is the first thing to raise a smile, and it's sure of it when the costumes start going for laughs. The designer, William Dudley, puts an improbable lavender zoot suit on a bodyguard called Creeper, decorates Pearl's pink high heels with pompoms, and decks out the newspaper proprietor Colonel Wigmore, who threatens to scupper Nicky Allen with a last-minute exposure of fraud, in a gray-and-yellow Civil War outfit that makes him look as if he'd just stepped off a Mardi Gras float. Rule No. 3: *When the costumes try to be funny, the situation isn't.*

"Our social consciousness consisted of scorning slogans and politicians," Ben Hecht writes of the period in which his collaboration with MacArthur began. "We looked on government as a hideaway for boodlers. Our tongues were our only leaders and our wits the only architects of tomorrow." The mischievous spirit, if not the architecture or the wit, is evident in the finale of "Johnny on a Spot," when the credulous American electorate votes a dead man into the Senate, and his replacement turns out to be Upjohn's opponent in the senatorial race, Mayor Lovett (Nicholas Day), who, immediately upon his elevation to higher office, drops his pretense to law and order and hops on the party-machine bandwagon. It's a compromise that also allows the evening's democratic felonies of forgery, vote rigging, embezzlement, and unconstitutional behavior to be set aside in the name of "good government." For Upjohn's entourage, the gamble pays off; for the Royal National Theatre, it doesn't. The show lays a cake: twelve eggs.

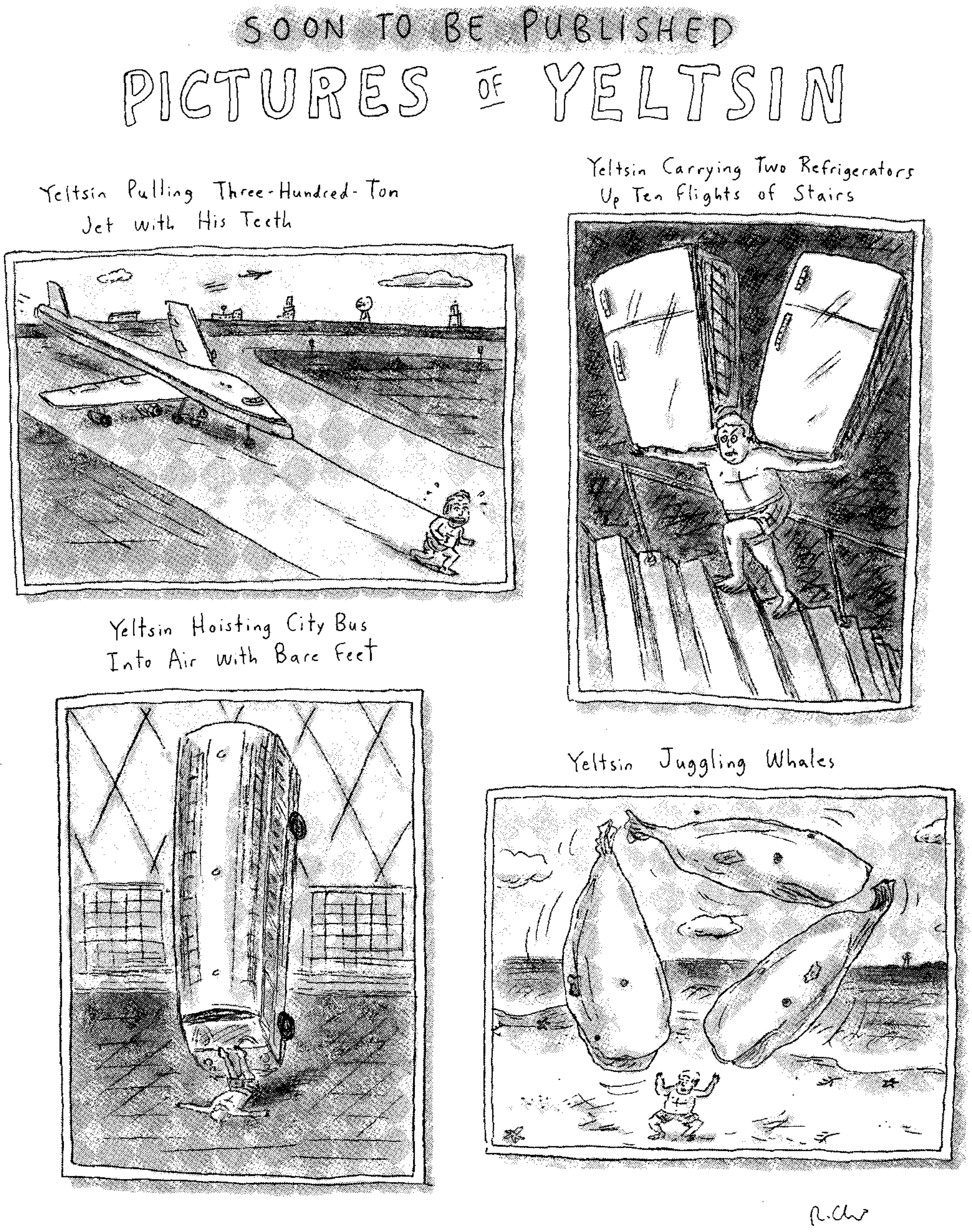
Soon after the play's failure, MacArthur entered the war, getting himself admitted as an Army major and assigned to chemical warfare. ("My God," the screenwriter Nunnally Johnson quipped, "aren't they afraid he'll drink it all up?") After the war, the youth that MacArthur so prized and so personified in his best writing had been left behind him. "No place ever quite seemed his home except the past," Hecht writes. MacArthur was beset first by writer's block; then, in 1949, by grief over the death of his daughter from polio; and, finally, by alcohol. "Then Charlie set about killing himself," Helen Hayes writes. "It took seven years, and it was harrowing to watch." He died in 1956. "Johnny on a Spot," for all its huffing and puffing, is a tired play. (Even its title doesn't take the trouble to get the slang idiom for "opportunist"—"Johnny on *the* spot"—quite right.) The play is glib without being inventive. It lacks fun and ferment, those distinguishing marks of youthful playfulness. If "Johnny on a Spot" has any significance, it is as an omen of MacArthur's threadbare times to come. ♦

GOD SAVE THE KING

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

KING RICHARD II has been dead for *six hundred years*, but his plight—he is capricious but not truly decisive, intelligent but not wise, exploits all the perquisites of power but lacks the qualities of a leader, and loses everything, including his life—makes him a compelling figure for late-twentieth-century audiences. We are connoisseurs of public degradation, devotees of downfall, but we're also fascinated by the light of self-discovery that we hope is at the end of the tunnel of failure. Steven Berkoff's production of "The Tragedy of Richard II," at the Public, deprives the audience of seeing what should be a riveting character transformation as Richard, undone by his own inadequacies, loses the throne but takes on a bruised humanity and becomes, by the end, not fit to be king but perhaps equipped with an understanding of what it is to be a man.

As Richard is portrayed by Michael Stuhlbarg, he seems half mad from the start, and so is psychologically left with nowhere to go but sideways on the dull plateau of lunacy. In the first scene, Richard and John of Gaunt (Earle Hyman) sit on chairs on the bare stage listening to the rivals Mowbray and Bolingbroke (Jack Stehlin and André Braugher) accuse each other of treason, and Mr. Stuhlbarg—whose face is covered with pale-white makeup, and who has an orange mustache and beard waxed into points, making him look like a cross between Marcel Marceau and the Joker—stares at the rivals with wide-eyed incomprehension, as if he were watching a tennis match and didn't know what tennis was. (His intense but unfocussed eyes and his distant relationship with reality kept calling up the image of Norma Desmond; it wasn't hard to picture this Richard drawing himself up and shouting dementedly, "I *am* big—it's the kingdom that got small!") His voice doesn't help matters: Shakespeare's Richard is a man in love with the sound of his own voice, and his words are beautiful, even in—especially in—his moments of self-pity, later in the play, but this Richard speaks in a high, quavery tenor that never gets a grip on the rich textures of the play's poetry.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While Mr. Berkoff has given Mr. Stuhlbarg too much freedom in his part, most of the other actors don't have enough. The floor of the stage has been painted with red lines—diagonals, a circle in the middle, and a rectangle inside the circle—and occasionally the actors have to literally toe the line: Carole Shelley, as the widowed Duchess of Gloucester, walks in pointless, robotic circles around John of Gaunt as she speaks of her grief. Sometimes the actors move in slow motion (adding many minutes to the performance, which lasts three and a half hours); sometimes they suddenly stop moving and create frozen tableaux; and sometimes, out of the blue, they make herky-jerky, windup-toy movements. At one point, a group of nobles, wearing top hats and fancy Edwardian getups, exit with their legs going up, back, sideways, every way but straight ahead, in an unmistakable, if mystifying, homage to John Cleese's Ministry of Silly Walks.

What gets in the way of the performances more than any other element, though, is the music, composed and played by Larry Spivack, which is heard almost all evening long. It's called for in several scenes, one of them Richard's last big speech, in the dungeon of Pomfret Castle, but the rest of the time the bells, the drums, the drony synthesizer, and the quasi-Baroque ditties needlessly underscore nearly every dramatic moment and compete with the acting.

Despite the directorial straitjacketing, some of the actors make an impression: Carole Shelley and Bray Poor (who plays several parts) are well spoken and memorable, and André Braugher (who stars in the TV series "Homicide"), as Bolingbroke, has the resolute, chilly single-mindedness proper to a usurper of the crown. On the night I was there, Mr. Hyman, delivering John of Gaunt's famous paean to England, had a piece of good luck: during his great speech, the trains that run below this subwayed isle, which rumbled and rattled constantly during the play, were miraculously silent. ♦

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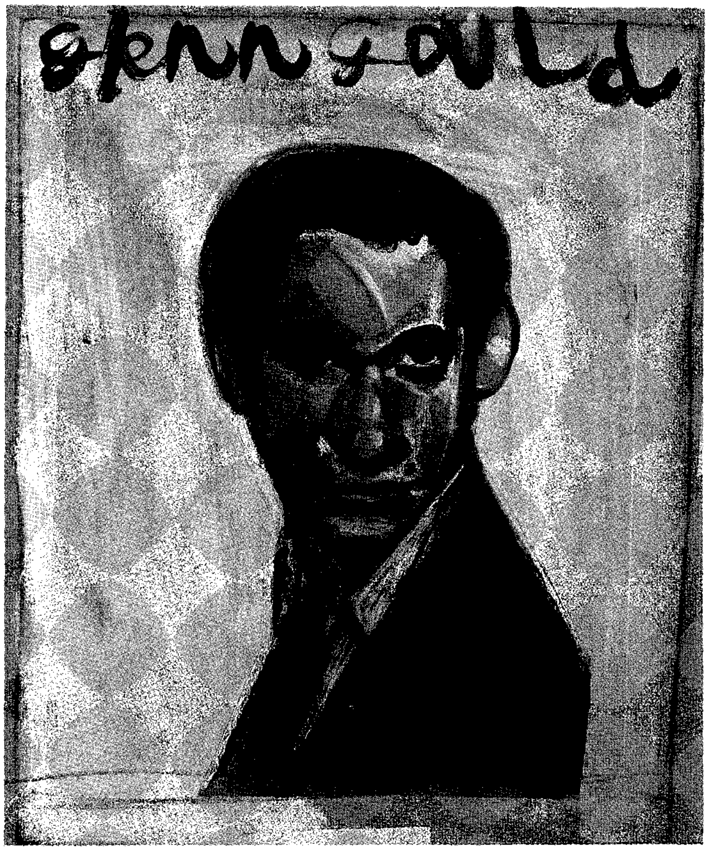
THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE GOULD VARIATIONS

BY ANTHONY LANE



In a different key: Colm Feore plays Glenn Gould.

THE Canadian pianist Glenn Gould was born in 1932, read music before he could read words, gave his first public recital at the age of twelve and his last at the age of thirty-one, and died in 1982. In his later years, he took to the recording studio as an invalid takes to his bed, or, in the view of his admirers, as a bird takes to the air. Gould's capacity to inspire and to estrange, to aggravate and to soothe, has yet to die down, and is unlikely to do so as long as people keep listening to Bach. His peculiar genius has now been accorded a suitable memorial—a movie that lies somewhere between an act of homage and a public inquiry. "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" is exactly what it sounds like. Some of the films run for forty-five seconds or so; none last longer than a few minutes; and the whole enterprise takes just over an hour and a half.

Directed by François Girard, the movie is a ragbag of styles, coming at its subject from every angle. It offers, among other things, interviews, animation, voice-overs, X-rays, rocket footage, a screen crammed with colorful drugs, and a screen buzzing with some kind of electrical pulse. (Wisely, it steers clear of the one thing most people know about Gould—his tendency while playing to hum like a stoned bee.) The over-all effect is about as far from traditional biopic as you could want, although its needs are much the same: call it a biolyric. The man himself is not seen until the end of the final credits, when that long, Neanderthal jaw and wary, scrunched-up posture come into view. For the purposes of the movie, which dramatizes scenes from his life and excerpts from his prose, he is played by the Canadian actor Colm Feore—no great look-alike but a fair stab at the unmanageable bundle of qualities, ranging from the courteous to the stubbornly fervid, that were said to make up Glenn Gould.

The first image is one of limitless white: the freezing expanses of Canada, with a black dot approaching the camera like a wintry version of Omar Sharif in "Lawrence of Arabia"—a kind of snow sheikh. It is Gould, wrapped in his favorite clothes, lost in his favorite landscape. The flat cap became a trademark, and his throat was forever guarded by scarves; the gloves came off indoors, though at one point in the movie he wears fingerless gray mittens—the supreme accessory, surely, for the concert pianist with a penchant for cold weather. Girard returns to the theme later on with shots of wet, desolate roads and a chilly German lake, and with a passage from Gould's radio broadcast "The Idea of North"; the point is not simply that Gould found beautiful and bracing what others would consider bleak but that, like Edvard Munch, he gave a good knock to our hand-me-down belief that artistic intensity is somehow the prerogative of the warm south. It is Bach, needless to say, that plays in this opening scene, contending with the wind and the creak of Gould's footsteps in the snow.

The next thing we hear, however, is the Prelude to "Tristan and Isolde." That is the movie's constant tactic, its means of getting into the slipstream of Glenn Gould and following his example: it makes us think again. Who would have put him down for a Wagnerian? But there he is as a young boy, rapt beside a radio, listening to Toscanini, with his proud mother looking on; he might almost be the young Charles Foster Kane. The movie looks set to proceed through Gould's life chronologically; instead, it jumps straight to the grown man, then darts around from one anecdote to the next—Gould the pill-popper, Gould the unrequited lover, Gould playing Scriabin and Hindemith and, triumphantly, the Toronto stock market. Yet there remains something driven about Girard's film: however playful it seems, there is a rush of obsessions keeping it on track, and a gathering gloom in the air. You can sense the end coming, as Gould himself did. The astounding sequence of a pianist filmed in X-ray—spectral feet tapping at the pedals, finger bones flying, skull nodding along in time—is both a guide to the wonders of the human machine and a pitch-black joke about its eventual breakdown.

"Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" adds up to the best movie made about music in a long while, but that's not saying much. More than any other breed of human being, composers have suffered at the hands of cinema, and the classical repertoire may never get over the abuse it took from Ken Russell. It's hard to forget the sight of Richard Chamberlain in "The Music Lovers" slamming away at the keyboard, face muscles twitching as if hooked up to the strings, although some viewers felt that in a perverse way it actually restored their moral, if not their musical, faith in Tchaikovsky: however mad he was, they argued, he couldn't have been *that* mad. But the entire form of the music movie is itchy with embarrassment—all those tricky creative urges to be dramatized, all that performing wizardry to be faked. Whatever the skill of the actors, and the slickness of the cutting, you just know they're putting it on—pretty much like screen sex, but without any helpful sheets to cover their tracks.

Girard gets around this with a simple rule: nobody is seen playing a piano. It is Gould that we hear, but Feore never tries to mimic him; instead, we watch him listening to a playback and conducting wildly (rather too wildly, I suspect), or sitting in a chair, listening patiently, and shutting his eyes at the restful close of the piece. The sense of complications that unfurl and flourish at a rate we can barely keep up with, only to resolve themselves with an ease that we could never have foreseen: that is what Gould sought and clarified in Bach, and what threw him out of step with other musicians and critics, who were uneasy with the notion that these complications could be bound up with difficulties of feeling. Girard tends to leave the controversy alone, preferring to let his camera speak for itself. During the "Tristan" sequence, it stares steadily through the trees at Lake Simcoe, the Gould family's summer home, and moves only when the music has settled majestically into a resolving chord, as if touched off by the release of tension. This is what keeps the movie fresh: Girard doesn't try to illustrate a score (always a vain hope); he peels away from it, lightly and obliquely, to pursue his own melodic line of images.

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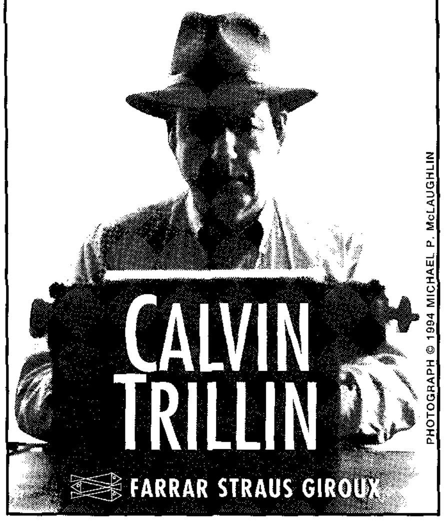

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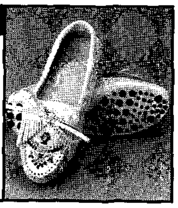

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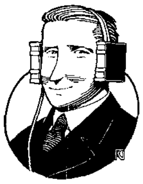

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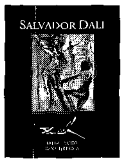

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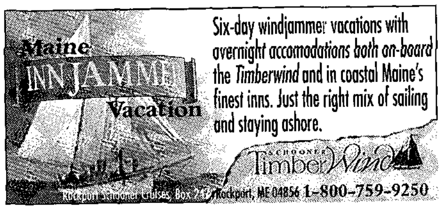

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other hand, might have been too much for Gould himself, who wrote, "There are musical moments of such grandeur that no screen can represent or interpret them adequately and for which the only appropriate visual response is abstraction, test pattern, or post-test-pattern snow." Girard takes him at his word, reducing parts of the movie to arrangements of pure shape; at one point, the camera travels inside Gould's own Steinway to observe the headlong parade of hammers during a prelude from "The Well-Tempered Clavier." This is dangerously hypnotic to watch, and, like so many of the sections, it's pruned well back: what could have been portentous or art-schoolish is brought up short by the presence of Bach. The one exception is a cartoon, by Norman McLaren: entitled "Spheres," and made in 1969, it can be honestly described as a load of balls, which zoom around in swirling outer space. Not even Bach can do much with this stuff; it merits a pretty bad-tempered clavier, and I hope that Girard included it only as a historical gag, to remind us of those far-off days when people took "2001: A Space Odyssey" seriously.

The best scene in the movie starts with a sick-looking Gould pacing a hotel room in Hamburg. There is a knock at the door, and a parcel is delivered; he opens it and pulls out a record. Until now, you haven't really noticed the chambermaid pottering about in the background; nor, do you think, has Gould. But now he asks her to stay, and sits her down while he puts the record on the phonograph. She protests a little, then gives in and smiles nervously, as well she might: just what does this lanky Canadian weirdo want from her? The music begins: Beethoven at his briskest, almost Bach-like—the Allegro from Sonata No. 13. In spite of herself, the maid is caught up in it, and her smile broadens; she gets up, looks at the cover of the record, and realizes who is playing. As the movement ends, she turns to Gould and says simply, "*Danke schön.*"

You get a fine hint here, as elsewhere, of lives crossing and sparking; the movie is rife with small-scale memories, each of them bearing full-grown emotions tucked away inside. The Beethoven sounds wonderful, but Gould's playing of it is only the start: we need to see how it spills outward—into the ears of the maid, into the look that she gives him. Girard is careful to show what happens on either side of music: the members of a string quartet murmuring among themselves as they lay down their instruments, or the ominous sight of Gould steeping his hands in hot water before venturing out onstage—for a split second, you think of slashed wrists. These details are perfectly judged, for it is Gould's achievement to engage us not only with the demeanor of his performances but with their suggestion of larger virtues beyond the piano—of a living temperament, a limber philosophical stance, unlocked by its keys. His writings, used frequently and freely by Girard, set him apart as the most learned and literate of modern musicians, matched only by Stravinsky. Gould was a solitary, but not an eccentric; rather, he made himself central, and drew people in. He was one of a band of impassioned ascetics thrown up by our century, all of them immune to intellectual half measures; this means that Gould groupies are a scary lot, who tend to read Wittgenstein and Walter Benjamin and Simone Weil, although it's probably safe to say that Gould was the only one with a taste for tomato ketchup and Petula Clark. Girard chose the right guy.

Why thirty-two short films about Glenn Gould? Partly, of course, as a tribute to the Goldberg Variations, which Gould recorded twice, once in youth and again at the end of his life. But what counts here is the spirit of profusion; the more films the merrier, I would say, including the melancholic ones. It's a change to find a filmmaker who has followed his wits and broken his allotted ninety minutes or so into appropriate lumps. If you'd asked Donald Barthelme to write a movie, this is the kind of thing he would have come up with. In its hip, ironic musings, it rescues Gould from the tag of gifted madman to bring him, more or less, down to earth. It also makes you realize just how tamely the art of cinema, which began in a flurry of formal experiment, has nestled down into a cozy narrative niche; with its skittish and searching manner, "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" suggests a way forward. Gould himself would have approved, I think. It might even have made him hum. ♦

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

GENERAL

Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime

by Richard Pipes
(Knopf; $35)

THIS book opens in 1918, amid the civil war that followed the Bolshevik seizure of power, and closes with Lenin's death, in 1924. It's good academic history, not dry but solid, offering no fancy writing and plenty of substantiating footnotes. And it is also an assault on myths, among them that Bolshevism was a popular movement, that Trotsky was "morally superior" to Stalin, and that Stalin perverted Lenin's legacy. Pipes believes that Stalinism was a continuation of Leninism, and his narrative shows that the institutions of Soviet oppression (censorship, secret police) were installed by Lenin. Although the author makes no obvious attempt to harrow our feelings, the monstrous suffering of these years—the famine of 1921, for example—almost defeats imagination. In his epilogue Pipes could be explaining the Soviet Union's crackup when he discusses the Russian Empire's disarray after the fall of the czar: "For all its immense territory and claim to great power status, the Russian Empire was a fragile, artificial structure, held together . . . by mechanical links provided by the bureaucracy, police, and army."

The Man in the Mirror: A Life of Benedict Arnold

by Clare Brandt
(Random House; $25)

BENEDICT ARNOLD'S name is synonymous with treason, and, as Brandt makes clear in this brisk narrative, it should also be a byword for corruption, self-delusion, and blind egotism. While Arnold was still young, his father's growing alcoholism plunged the family from prosperity into penury; the rest of his life was spent trying to gain the wealth and respect he felt he was owed. War offered him what he most desired—a chance for rapid advancement—and he proved a brave and skillful general. But he was quick to perceive slights of any sort, and rankled when others in the Continental Army were promoted over him. The carping interference of civil authorities in the Army's affairs and investigations of his abuses of power led Arnold to believe that his best hope for wealth and status would be to join the King's Army, and he set out to negotiate terms. Arnold wanted twenty thousand pounds for turning West Point, the crucial Hudson River bastion he commanded, over to the British. He forced Major John André, the British intelligence officer, to travel through American lines to conclude the deal, and this ultimately led to André's capture and execution, the exposure of the plot, and the flight of Arnold to the British lines. After the war, he kept trying to win from the Crown greater wages for his sin, never realizing that even the intended beneficiaries of treachery despise the traitor.

RECOMMENDED

(Our choice of books recently reviewed on this page. The date of the note is given.)

A Tiler's Afternoon
by Lars Gustafsson
New Directions (12/6)

Fima
by Amos Oz
Harcourt Brace (1/31)

The Last Hunt
by Horst Stern
Random House (1/31)

Harriet Beecher Stowe
by Joan D. Hedrick
Oxford (3/7)

On Familiar Terms
by Donald Keene
Kodansha (4/4)

An Adirondack Passage: The Cruise of the Canoe Sairy Gamp

by Christine Jerome
(HarperCollins; $20)

AN enchanting record of a canoe trip by the author and her husband following the 1883 route of an eccentric wilderness wanderer, George Washington Sears. (Sears, who reported his adventures in *Forest and Stream*, christened his boat in memory of Dickens' drunken midwife, hoping that, like her namesake, she would take no water.) Although ninety per cent of the remaining wilderness east of the Mississippi lies in Adirondack Park, the area has been dotted with resorts for over a century, so the Jeromes, like Sears, paddled through a world in which the luxurious, the grungy, and the Edenic sublime each took a turn. The author traced not only Sears' travels but his references to people and places, and she recounts the region's human as well as its natural history. Her evocative book correctly describes the route as a "necklace of stories" shaped by the Adirondacks' "necklace of lakes strung on rivers."

On Fire

by Larry Brown
(Algonquin; $17.95)

THIS is a book about fire. Not natural fire, the almost topographical wildfire that Stephen Pyne writes about in his fine books, but the kind of fire that brings a pumper screaming down your street to a place where there is nothing to say to the people who used to live there. Brown is the author of two novels and two books of short stories, and in 1990 he retired from the Oxford, Mississippi, Fire Department with the rank of captain. He is blunt and abrasive about subjects that tend to cause flinching. He tells stories in plain language about what goes on when you work for the fire department of a small city and people continue to set their recliners on fire and drive their automobiles under tractor-trailers. The firemen are the good guys in this book. They hunt and fish and they smoke and drink; in fact, they do a lot of things that seem inappropriate and would warrant your disapproval if there weren't the possibility that someday yours would be the house the pumper was screaming toward, a house where secondhand smoke was no longer something to get pissy about. You might read this book twice. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

LISTENING TO BOURBON

BY LOUIS MENANDE

REPORTS of a drug said to relieve inhibition, promote conviviality, blunt the sex drive, and turn morbid misanthropes into jolly, can-do airheads did not come as a complete surprise to some us, since we were already familiar with a substance that provides virtually the same medical benefits. How this product, which most people can acquire just by presenting a valid driver's license, has managed to escape the attention of psychopharmacologists is a puzzle. Still, there is reason to be grateful to the philosophical branch of the psychopharmacological profession for identifying an issue that had, frankly, never seemed worth getting too ontologically bent out of shape about. And that is, of course, the question: Which is the real self? Is it the self on bourbon? Or is it the self unmodified by bourbon?

This is not a matter to be approached glibly. For the problem of identity is a sea on which many philosophers have lost their way. Consider a bundle of sticks from which one stick is removed, and then another, and then another. After the removal of which stick does the bundle of sticks cease to be "a bundle of sticks"? Or take the case of the knife whose blade has been replaced once and whose handle has been replaced three times. What grounds do we have for saying that it is still "the same knife"?

As with things, so with selves. The sexual stallion and future world-beater of nineteen, for whom three pizzas and an accompanied hour in the back seat of a car are just the beginning of a decent evening, and the sagging commuter of twenty-five years later, who staggers home hoping only to have the stamina to make it through the first half hour of "Charlie Rose," are nominally "the same person." But by virtue of what? Of having the same Social Security number? Identity is the artificial flower on the compost heap of time.

So that when we begin to talk, as recent best-selling speculation on the metaphysics of pill-popping teaches us to talk, about the bourbon drinker's "real self," we are immediately made aware of a certain fugitive quality in the object of our attention. Certainly the person who after taking bourbon saunters merrily across the room at a cocktail party and says, with a feeling indistinguishable from sincerity, "Great to see you" to someone he has never met is not "the same" as the person who an hour earlier waited for the next elevator so he wouldn't have to ride down with the boss.

But then the person who has just finished a pint of coffee ice cream with cookie dough is, by every measure, not the person she was before she opened the freezer door. The person who has spent the night cleaning up after a six-year-old with a stomach virus is no longer the obliging and fair-minded chap he was when he bedded down the previous evening. The person who has paid seven dollars and fifty cents to sit through "Intersection," starring Richard Gere and Sharon Stone, is not the person who thought this sounded like a really good movie. Mood transformations have many agents.

Probably the only thing to say about the "real self," in short, is that it is, of all our selves, the one it seems the least pretentious to own up to. Is this the self that greets personal setbacks with a chipper fortitude, that chatters amiably with idiots at a party, that maintains a healthy nonchalance in the company of members of the opposite sex? Or is it the self that would rather drive aimlessly for hours than ask directions, that broods for weeks after failing to receive an invitation to a party he had no desire to attend, that worries obsessively that his new haircut is a complete turnoff? Most bourbon drinkers have no hesitation in identifying the first self as a complete fake and embarrassment and the second as the self that, given the way things are, it is most reasonable to be. That's why they need the bourbon.

It's true that bourbon drinkers can experience unpleasant side effects unknown to consumers of faddish pharmaceuticals. But bourbon has other advantages. A glass or two neat is as close as most people can get to feeling like a novelist or an Abstract Expressionist without actually having to write or paint anything—a state thought desirable even by novelists and painters, and one that cannot be manufactured by mood transformers that come in capsule form. Sexual performance may be reduced by bourbon, but ribaldry, which is, after all, a much safer indulgence, is nicely enhanced. And for steady users death, when it comes, though painful, is mercifully swift. ♦

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